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HENRY MASTERTON;

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THE ADVENTURES

OF

A YOUNG CAVALIER.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "RICHELIEU," "PHILIP AUGUSTUS," &c.

George P. R. James

Nay, droop not: being is not breath:

'Tis fate that friends must part:

But God will bless, in life, in death,

The noble soul, the gentle heart.

J. G. LOCKHART

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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HENRY MASTERTON.

CHAPTER I.

I OPENED my eyes to the light of day on the shores of that part of the British Channel where the narrow seas which interpose between France and England first show an inclination to spread out into the Atlantic Ocean.

My father's house—Oh, what a multitude of thrilling memories, of early years, and happy dreams, and gall-less pleasures, rise up at the very name, mingling with the forms of the loved and the dead, and the tones of sweet voices that are heard no more—My father's house was raised upon the summit of one of those high cliffs which guard the coast of Devonshire; and, sweeping round within view of the windows, was a small beautiful bay, not a league and a half in diameter, within which the blue waters of the sea collected deep and still, as if for the purpose of repose. Bold high rocks, of a similar character to that of which our dwelling was perched, flanked the bay to the east; and on the west a long range of sandy shores extended towards the Atlantic, sloping gradually up into green fertile hills, whose high tops, covered with rich woods of oak and beach, sheltered the calm expanse below from the wild gales that race across the wide ocean beyond. In some places those woods would sweep down the sides of the hills till they almost dipped their branches in the sea; and, following the bend of the bay, at a greater or less distance from the shore, during more than one-half of its extent, they reached un-

broken to the eastern angle of Masterton House, as my parental mansion was called; and then, broken into scattered clumps of fine old trees, planted themselves in the valleys and the dells, and gave a character of antique grandeur to the scenery around.

Through these trees and woods, down the sides of the cliffs, among the valleys inland, and the deep coves and inner bays by the seashore, was a perfect labyrinth of paths and walks, connected in the remembrance of my youth with a thousand childish adventures and exploits; and here, as we often proved in our boyish sports, a person well acquainted with the spot might baffle the pursuit even of others who possessed as intimate a knowledge of its intricacies as himself.

The house itself presented nothing particularly worthy of description. It was one of those, many of which were destroyed in the civil wars, sufficiently defensible to bid defiance to a small force, but too weak to resist a regular siege for any length of time. The rooms, the chimneys, and the staircases were numerous; and though all of these, except the chimneys, were small, yet sufficient space had been thrown away to build forty of any such houses as have been constructed in the present day.

Having given so far an account of our dwelling-place and the country round it, I have now to speak of those by whom it was inhabited; and I must begin somewhat prior to my own recollections, in order to render my after history clear and intelligible.

Up to the time of my birth, my father, I have been told, held an office of high trust and honour at the court of King Charles I., and his character greatly assimilating with that of the monarch whom he served, a long prospect of advancement, power, and splendour was laid open before him. Naturally fond of the country, he would have spent his whole time in Devonshire, had not his official station required his presence almost continually in London. My mother, however, whose tastes were better suited to a court than

those of my father, was obliged by his especial wish and command to remain far from the capital; and her husband—who was rather fond of martyring his feelings to his duty, sometimes even without much necessity—imagined that by abandoning a country life and domestic joys, he was making an inestimable sacrifice to his king. Thus feeling himself, in his commune with the monarch, less the person obliged than the person obliging, he assumed, it was reported, a certain degree of independence and authority to which no man was in general less inclined to submit than the king. The cause of his giving way to it so long in the case of my father was, probably, that his dignity was always secure in the rigid and somewhat formal respect with which my worthy parent did not fail to accompany his opposition of the royal will, or his obdurate assertion of his own opinion. He would not have deviated from that decorous reverence for the world; and while he was practically telling his majesty that his actions were madness or his words were folly, he was declaring in set terms his profound deference for the royal wisdom. There existed also, as I have said before, a great similarity of feeling in many respects between the monarch and his servant; the very rigid adherence to particular theories, however opposite those theories might be, was a part of the same character. The same imperturbable, almost melancholy calmness existed in both; the same fearlessness of consequences, but in my father's case without the same paroxysms of irresolution which at times unnerved the king; the same devoted desire of doing right, but also the same imperious manner of enforcing what they judged to be so, in opposition to the reasons, prejudices, or feelings of every one else.

Such sources of sympathy did in all probability act in attaching the sovereign to my father; but upon what principle existed the great, undeviating, and devoted friendship which did exist between Lord Masterton and the Earl of Langleigh, I confess I am at a loss to know. From all I have ever heard, there never yet

breathed the air of this globe two people more dissimilar in every respect, except in the basis of unswerving honour and integrity, than Lord Langleigh and my father. The one light, gay, quick, vehement; the other calm, stern, cold, determined. Lord Langleigh, with all his keen good sense and shrewd wit, set high value upon a thousand trifles which my father contemned and despised. He would not have fought a duel for the world without his peculiar and appropriate hat, nor lain down by his wife without his particular and appointed night-cap; and yet, by his bold and reckless spirit, he would often bring himself into situations where he was obliged to fight with any hat that happened to cover him, or sleep without any night-cap at all.

Such conduct, in the eyes of my father, was the acme of human absurdity; and yet for Lord Langleigh he had the most sincere regard and the most genuine respect. They had been early, long, and constant friends; and they had found through life, that while the original uprightness of their intentions generally ensured a similarity of purpose, in any moment of difficulty the quick wit of Lord Langleigh would often suggest an expedient that had not struck the slower mind of my father; while the steady judgment of Lord Masterton would often avert a danger which would have fallen on his more precipitate friend. Thus a mutual confidence and esteem had been born and grown up between them, although a number of the actions of each were matter for jest or reprehension to the other.

A period, however, arrived, towards the time of my birth, which tried their friendship by the test of adversity. The king's determination to support the prerogative of the crown by every effort met the strongest approbation of the two friends, till they found that that determination went farther and menaced the liberty of the subject; but from that moment their opposition was fixed.

The sincere affection which they both felt towards their royal master, and which made them more fearful

perhaps for his honour and safety than even for the freedom of their country, induced them to take those measures of thwarting his most dangerous designs, which were likely, if discovered, to prove perilous to themselves and irritating to him.

It is by no means my purpose to enter here into the well-known historical details of the period. Suffice it to say, that my father and Lord Langleigh became the dupes of their own schemes. They were foolish enough to believe the sincerity of a body of men who professed moderation, to co-operate with a party from which they differed in ultimate objects, to imagine that all men really sought the good of their country who called themselves patriots, and to confide in an individual who talked continually of his honour. Of course they were used as tools, and despised, till they discovered their mistake, and were betrayed at the moment they hoped to retrieve their error.

On finding that two of his privy council had been guilty of the weakness, if not the crime, to which I have alluded, the king called them to his presence; and though a lingering feeling of regard, and the conviction that their intentions were better than their deeds, prevented him from pursuing the stern and unrelenting measures which his harsher counsellors advised, he dismissed them from their offices at once, and forbade them ever to show themselves at his court again.

My father bowed in silence and withdrew, determined to obey the command to the letter. Lord Langleigh replied, that he hoped a year and a day would be sufficient to make his majesty change his counsels, his counsellors, and his commands; and retired as if from the most indifferent conversation.

The mortification, the bitterness, and the humiliation, which my father felt most keenly, he proceeded to bury in the country, where he arrived in time to be present at my birth and to close the eyes of my mother, whose death was the consequence of my existence. Lord Langleigh, on the contrary, proceeded on a tour of pleasure, forgot the disgrace he had suffered, enjoyed

to the full new scenes, new society, and new amusements; married, became a father, and returned to the court within two years.

Though separated during this period, the two friends had not ceased to correspond, and their regard had increased, rather than diminished, under their reverses. But shortly after the return of Lord Langleigh to the court, his letters to my father were interrupted for two months; and at length, the news of his committal to the Tower, his trial, and his condemnation for high-treason reached Lord Masterton in Devonshire. My father instantly set off for London with all speed; and arrived in time to offer consolation and sympathy to his friend, if he could not afford him assistance. His own fate Lord Langleigh had borne with easy firmness. He acknowledged to my father that he had, since his return to London, been more imprudent than before he left it; and, though he solemnly averred that he had never entertained a treasonable design, yet he confessed that the judgment which had been passed upon him had been justified by strong cause of suspicion. Death he looked upon as a man of the most dauntless courage may regard a scarecrow; and all the pomp and circumstance of public execution he spoke of with a jest; but the doom which he feared not had gone with fatal effect to the bosom of his wife. She had done all that woman could do to move an inflexible monarch. She had used prayers, and tears, and influence in vain. She had sunk under the united effects of grief and exertion; and, a week before the time appointed for the death of her husband, her spirit had left a world of sorrow, for a brighter and happier place of dwelling. In regard to her, Lord Langleigh dared not speak with my father, for it was a subject that unmanned him; but of his child—his little Emily—he spoke long and fondly. He gave her into my father's charge, and exacted a promise from him that he would watch, and guard, and cherish her as his own. The promise was willingly made; and, in addition, my father voluntarily

pledged himself to see her married to his eldest son, as soon as years admitted of their union.

I have often heard my father describe the scene which took place when this promise was made. It was the last night Lord Langleigh had to live; and when he spoke of his child, the severing of that dear shook him more than the parting from life itself: like the breaking chord of some fine instrument, it vibrated through a thousand corresponding tones of feeling in his heart. He wept bitterly, as for the last time he kissed the infant cheek of the last bond between him and earth; and, bidding the nurse take her from him, he wrung my father's hand, solemnly repeating the injunctions he had given respecting her.

"Now leave me, Masterton," he said, "leave me. In parting with that child, I have already felt the edge of the axe. What is to come," he added, resuming his composure, "is but as mounting my horse to go and join my other Emily, who has set out before me; and the way, thanks to the executioner from Calais, is short and easy. I have yet one other friend to take leave of," he continued, "a poor, good youth that, in happier days, I helped to his promotion; and who now, by some evil chance, has fallen upon the rueful task of captain of the guard over me. He waits to see me, for the last time, ere he leads me to the block; so fare thee well, Masterton, fare thee well! We part in this world; but, through Christ, we shall be reunited in heaven!"

A young officer entered as my father passed out, and the two friends separated, never to meet again. The next morning passed in horror to my father, who remained with the infant child of his friend, counting the last moments of that friend's life. The execution was ordered for noon; but about nine o'clock the door of my father's chamber was thrown open, and a messenger of the privy council appeared, charged to bring Lord Masterton before that body. My father of course obeyed at once, but as they proceeded he naturally endeavoured to ascertain from the messenger the cause

The disappointment of his ambition, the humiliation of his pride, the death of his wife, and the loss of his friend had all more or less contributed to add both gloom and sternness to my father's character; and the unquestioning obedience with which his commands were uniformly met within his own domains rendered him from day to day more imperious in his manner, although the melancholy reserve which pervaded his whole mind made his orders few; and his natural sense of equity and humanity caused them in general to be such as were easily fulfilled. But he allowed not a moment's hesitation or doubt in their execution, and the steady clearness of his own intellect scarcely suffered him to make allowance for diffidence or misconception. Thus, in his own family, and by his own domestics, he was feared and respected rather than loved; and in the neighbourhood, which was but scantily peopled, he was more esteemed than liked. Even his attachment to his children, which was great, was controlled by a certain sternness, which, though it did not deprive him of our affection, mingled our fondness with terror; and our only way of showing our love was by a watchful anxiety to catch and obey the slightest expression of his will.

The greater part of my father's time was passed in solitude, if that can be called so where the society of the learned and the wise of other days—a society which we can form on calm reflection and select without offence—supplies the place of that living crowd which we must take at venture as it comes, and in which we cannot winnow the gold-dust from the drossy sand. His library was his chief resort; and there, I have remarked, the principal subjects of his study were those arts of policy which he had renounced for ever, or that philosophical facility of temper and demeanour which he never by any chance displayed.

His exercise, taken at stated hours, always combined some other purpose. It was either devoted to pay some visit of stately ceremony to the neighbouring gentry, or to teach or witness the instruction of my

brother in some of those polite exercises for which he had himself been famous—the management of his horse, the use of his sword, to shoot, to wrestle, or to swim.

At a very early age I also was admitted to witness these sports, though not permitted to take a part in them, farther than in riding the immemorial pony which had carried me, I believe, before I could walk. Mine, however, was all the eagerness and all the excitement of the scene. My father and brother passed through the various feats and evolutions of the riding-school and the regiment, with the same steady calmness; and while my heart throbbed with ardour and anxiety, while my young eye flashed, and my cheek glowed with pleasure and expectation, it seemed to them but a matter of mere practice to be taught by the one and acquired by the other, without their feelings being at all moved in the employment of the hour.

Thus passed the time, while the fewness of the years which either my brother or myself had numbered rendered the difference of our ages more decided; but as we both grew up, and I too began to mingle in the more manly exercises with which he was still proceeding, a great change took place in our relative situation.

No two creatures on earth could be more different in character and disposition than Frank and myself; and yet, be it ever remembered that we loved each other throughout most dearly.

He was a singular being, my brother, and it is only by snatches of what he did that his character can be clearly understood. In my early youth he seemed to regard me as a sort of pet, which was to be spoiled and chastised, fondled, loved, and controlled: and, in truth, I believe that during all our mutual lives, he continued more or less to consider me in the same light. Nay, even long after we had grown up, when my impetuosity burst all thralldom, it only seemed as if he lent the power into my own hands, which it was his to

exercise over me, and let me have my own way more as a favour than a right.

And yet, though he loved me, and though I loved him—for on every occasion where his voice, or his hand, or his talents would support or aid me, they were exerted in my behalf—yet he never, or but rarely, gave me his confidence. Indeed, it was not in his nature to do so. He was naturally reserved and grave, fond of long and solitary rambles, and of deep thought, across the cloud-like sombreness of which the lightning of enthusiasm seemed seldom or never to break. Still, he was not without passions; but, though naturally strong and overpowering, they were not easily excitable; and, requiring ever external objects to call them into action, seemed to have no original source in his own mind; or, like the fire of a volcano, to lie hid deep under mountains of gray dust and ashes.

The pursuits that engaged him were not, in general, like those of other youths. Profound and abstract studies, long abstruse calculations, would occupy him day after day and night after night, till his bright brown eye would wax dim with watching, and his (dark black) hair would grow tangled and dishevelled with intense neglect. But then again he would spring upon his horse, and ride like some of the fiendish horsemen of a German tale, the cavalier and his beast seemingly inspired by but one will, defying space and obstacles, and time and fatigué. Or he would catch up his gun, and day after day roam through the woods performing feats of marksmanship that almost repel belief. Then again he would lie idle and listless on the grass in the sun, to use his own expression, "like the village natural at an inn-door," and comment quaintly on the absurdities of man—of whom he knew little or nothing; and the hatefulness of cities—that he had never seen!

Though the natural character of his mind was a sort of gloomy reserve, yet there would occasionally intervene moments of a happier mood, in which, as the humour prompted, he would display great powers to interest and amuse, or to censure and to sneer, or to

reason and confute. Even in those early years he was a most accomplished sophist ; and with a vein of casuistry, which he had acquired heaven knows where, he would have outargued the cunning father of all false reasoning himself. Yet he never appeared to have any sort of eagerness, or to feel any sort of excitement in all the various occupations in which he consumed his time. If he argued, it was with cool precision, and apparently more for the sake of victory than from any deep impression of the justice of the proposition he supported. When he read, he cared not for interruption ; and would lay down and resume his book with perfect indifference, though, when left to himself, he would pore over it for days together. Were he called on to stop while urging his horse forward in full career, he would bring him up at once, without a change of aspect, or an appearance of haste ; and when following with his crossbow a deer in the spring, no rapid energy betrayed the fatal certainty of his aim.

My own feelings towards Frank were certainly of a mingled character. By right of primogeniture, rank, station, and fortune were his ; while the fortune of my mother, though it secured me competence, was but a younger brother's portion, and approached not near to affluence. Yet far was it from me to envy my brother's superior expectations. Of the splendour and the wealth that awaited him I entertained not one jealous desire. On the contrary, I thought of his possessing all that could honour or distinguish him, with pleasure and with pride ; and, contented with the second station in my family, I would willingly have added, had it been in my power, to the riches and the lordships of my house's head.

But his talents and his skill I confess I envied. The perfect ease with which he seemed to do every thing that to other men required long practice and exertion was the object of my vain endeavour, and the subject of many a bitter mortification. I felt that I was not deficient either in mental or corporeal powers. I had as much facility in acquiring knowledge or art as most

of those whom I encountered; and at a very early period, when I witnessed my brother's superiority, I resolved by close application to outdo him, especially in manly exercises. But it seemed as if he had got a start of me in the race of life, which I was never to recover. After long and constant practice, I called him to try his carbine at the target. My bullets lodged within the inner ring, but his cut the bull's eye on every side. With the foils it was the same. No exercise put me on a par with him; and it was only in riding, to which we had both been accustomed from our very infancy, that I could at all compete with him on equal terms.

Many a time, after some unsuccessful trial, have I gone and sat for hours in some of the deep nooks of the bay, pondering gloomily over my own want of success, and trying in vain to discover by any effort of my mind what was the flaw in my nature which rendered all my efforts so ineffectual. No feeling of anger towards my brother, however, ever mingled with my meditations. I was dissatisfied with myself; and the more so, as I found that my very eagerness rendered my failure more certain. When by any chance the sons of the neighbouring gentry entered into competition with me in the sports to which we were accustomed, feeling confident by constant practice, I far excelled what I could ever accomplish when my brother was my rival; and I believe he purposely avoided all such meetings, in order to let me carry off the prizes of the day.

It must be remarked, at the same time, that even had not such been his motive, I do not think he ever would have sought any of these assemblies. In this we differed as much as in any other part of our characters. He hated and shunned society; and in general, when forced by circumstances to mingle with others of his own age and rank, remained silent and inactive; wrapped in an impenetrable reserve, which was mixed up of both pride and shyness. To me, on the contrary, society was more frequently a delight. I loved,

it is true, to ramble in solitude over the rocks, or through the woods, or by the side of the calm blue fanciful sea; or to skim over its bosom, alone in my own boat, and dream sweet dreams of a splendid and a fragrant world, that existed but in my own imagination. But then when these dreams were dreamed, I loved to have some one to share them with; and to say to them what I would do, and how I would act, when I should be suffered to go forth into the visionary place which I fancied was laid out before my steps. I was fond of the beauties of nature too. I delighted to perch myself upon some high ground on a day of mingled cloud and sunshine, and mark the different aspects of the scene, as the broad masses of shadow were driven across the face of the country by the wind—now seeing tower, and town, and wood as, all involved in deep shade, they rested in picturesque darkness on a bright and sunny background of hill beyond; and now watching them as they emerged into clear light, and smiled up in the fulness of the rays, while the shadow of the cloud hurried rapidly over the uplands behind.

Every nook of our own woods too—whether, breaking suddenly away, they afforded a wide, grand prospect over the sea and its shores of bold and broken rock; or, gathering round some fountain, or bending over the lapse of some pure stream, they formed a sweet home scene, of calm and mild repose—every nook was known, and loved, and familiar to my footsteps. The face of all the rocks also; each path, each angle; every sea-side cove, every cave, and every bay were visited in turn; and were the haunts of a thousand wild dreams and enthusiastic imaginings. And yet, as I wandered through the beautiful country that surrounded our dwelling, I longed to have some one to share my fancies and my pleasures, to admire where I admired, and dream along with me. At length those longings found an object; and my imagination fixed upon a person whose coming was not far distant, whom I determined to lead through all the spots I loved my-

self, and with whom I proposed to renew all the enjoyment of a lovely scene and a lovely season.

This person was Emily Langleigh, who at seven years of age had been sent by my father to a convent in one of the neighbouring islands, to acquire all those feminine accomplishments which could not so well be procured in the dwelling of a widower in Devonshire. She had now reached thirteen years of age; and Lord Masterton had wisely determined to withdraw her at that period from the care of the good nuns, whose instructions had gone as far as he desired; and to establish her in his own house, till her age should permit her union with my brother, who had now attained his twentieth year. The arrangements for that union were fully understood by the whole family; and I, at fifteen, prepared to receive Emily Langleigh as my sister.

I dreamed then of showing her, in the capacity of a brother, all that could please, or interest, or amuse in the spot she had so long quitted; for I had perfectly settled in my own mind—whether from a thorough acquaintance with my brother's character, or from my own wishes, I know not—that the ciceroneship of the place would be left in my hands. With boyish ardour and eagerness, I pictured to my mind's eye the pleasure she would feel in this beautiful scene, or that curious object; and my whole dreams—dangerous ones they were—consisted in contributing to her amusement, or witnessing her delight. Nevertheless, there was not one idea among all that went on in my heart and in my brain that had aught of offence in its nature. Not a feeling, not a thought possessed my breast which I wished, or could have wished, my brother not to see. So far from it, with the gay and somewhat teasing liveliness of my youthful disposition, I jested him continually upon the coming of his future wife; and attributed to him feelings of anxiety and agitation, which I knew he was very far from experiencing. Still farther, I even contemplated standing by his side when Emily Langleigh gave him her hand at the altar; and

partook in anticipation of the happiness that was to be theirs.

As the time came near for Emily's arrival, my delight ran off in a thousand extravagances, which called down upon my head a reprimand from Lord Masterton; and as I broke a horse for Emily to ride, or new-rigged my boat for Emily to sail, my brother looked on with a smile, that was any thing but gay.

At length Emily Langleigh arrived at Masterton House, a bright, pretty creature, of little more than thirteen, with a figure and features which, though yet scarcely formed, afforded the promise of a very lovely girl hereafter.

My father stood on the steps to receive her, and by his side my brother Frank, for whom, as a matter of propriety, I made way. But though Lord Masterton was particularly kind to his young ward, and though he greatly softened towards her the stern asperity of his general demeanour, my brother met her in one of his coldest moods, remained profoundly silent, and, if he offered her some little attentions which he could not avoid, his politeness was somewhat scanty.

Emily herself had been made aware of the engagement entered into between my father and hers; and raised her beautiful hazel eyes towards my brother's face, with a look of imploring anxiety, well calculated to win its way to the inmost recesses of the heart; but there was nothing answered her; and, repelled at once into herself, she turned to me with lighter and less embarrassed feelings, and received my gay and warm salute as cheerfully as it was given.

That first interview seemed the type of the future demeanour of all the parties. The arrival of Emily changed not in the least the usual conduct of my brother. He would indeed, sometimes, as if out of pure perversity, request her presence to see some curious object, or beg to escort her on some particular ride, when I had laid out a totally different expedition; but in general he remained as much alone, as grave, as studious as if she had never entered the house. Te-

wards him, on the contrary, Emily's behaviour was all that was excellent. The slightest wish he expressed she was prompt to obey; all his actions were approved, all his words were listened to; and it seemed that having made up her mind to become his wife, she was practising beforehand the conduct which might be proper in that station.

To me she was all frank kindness, easy, unaffected, unembarrassed; and towards me too all that girlish gayety broke forth, which in the presence of my brother was restrained by an unconquerable timidity. She would laugh with me, she would jest with me, she would tease me; and roaming like two wild things through the woods, and by the seashore, the keen encounters of our young wits would vary the bursts of enthusiastic pleasure which the sight of every new beauty would call forth. Many a little accident occurred to us in our rambles, many a little service I rendered the fair girl, who every day and every hour was expanding into more splendid loveliness; and in the course of our almost uninterrupted companionship we laid up a treasure of mutual thoughts, and feelings, and memories which none knew or shared in but ourselves.

The idea of rivalry between Frank and myself never entered the imagination of my father, or Emily, or me. We all considered it as a thing so perfectly out of the question, that we took no care to obviate a danger which we did not believe to exist. Whether my brother ever dreamed of a growing affection between Emily and myself, or not, he took no pains to guard against it either; and when, by that assumption of superiority and power over me which I have before mentioned, he had—as often happened—given me pain and offence, he would send Emily to find me out, in the solitude to which I had carried my indignation, for the purpose of soothing and consoling me, and bringing about a reconciliation.

The tones of her voice as she came on such messages of peace became dear, too dear to me, as time

flew on; and yet, as I have said, I had not even an idea of what was passing in my heart. Various circumstances, indeed, should have given me a better insight into my own mind. I never placed her on her horse without feeling my whole frame thrill. Once, when an unexpected influx of the sea forced me to bear her across a little bay in my arms, I felt my heart beat far more than haste or danger ever occasioned. I experienced I knew not what painful sensations too when she praised my brother's skill and grace in all military exercises; and I gradually grew sad when she was absent, and cheerful only when she was near. I remarked also, that Frank often turned his eyes, first upon her, and then suddenly upon me; and more than once, about two years after Emily's arrival, my brother's servant, Gabriel Jones, broke in upon our solitary rambles.

Having mentioned this man's name, I may as well say a few words more of his character. He was as artful a villain as ever lived; but according to the puritanical fashion of the day, he strove to cover his knavery under the garb of sanctity.

At that time religious fanaticism raged in England as a species of epidemic, and every cunning rogue used it as a cloak for his deeper designs. My brother Frank, however, understood his valet's character well; and used to declare, in his cynical moods, that he would rather be served by a skilful knave than an honest fool. But the master who chooses such a servant should never let his judgment sleep, or give one moment the rein to his passions. In many instances Frank at once detected his knave's arts, and used them quite contrary to Master Gabriel's intentions; but at other times, though not the dupe, my brother was the sufferer, and had to regret deeply that he had, to use his own expression, "condescended to play a game at chess with his own servant, and had made one false move."

The person who filled about my person the same dignified station was a youth of much less pretensions,

and more honesty. He was not, like Gabriel, a puritan in any thing; and, far less like Gabriel, a puritan in taste and sentiment. He could not judge the feeling expressed in a pale pink doublet, or a bright blue vest. He could neither tie a sword-knot in fifty different fashions; nor could he proportion the rose to the shoe it was to grace with the exquisite precision of a London haberdasher. But William Fells had a simple shrewdness which served him as well as Gabriel Jones's artful cunning; and he had, besides, a quick hand, a bold heart, a ready wit, and a frame of iron.

Whatever were Gabriel's motives for watching Emily and myself,—and whether he, in the base slyness of his own nature, attributed to us schemes and purposes of concealment which we never dreamed of, I feel certain that my brother was perfectly guiltless of all connivance in his *espionage*. On the contrary, whenever Frank's eye rested on me and Emily together, there seemed a melancholy glance of regard towards us both, which never shone in them on any other occasion, and which implied any thing but jealousy or suspicion. One day, indeed, I remember entering his antechamber, when the valet was in the act of hanging his sword over my brother's shoulder, and had apparently been insinuating doubt of some one—for Frank, as I approached, replied aloud in his calm, logical manner:—

“No, no, Master Gabriel, it is the worst policy in the world ever to bear an appearance of doubt towards another, till he have given you just cause. Your suspicion may make an enemy, but it can never gain a friend; and a man who is distrusted, finding he has nothing to gain by honesty, or to lose by villany, very often becomes a knave through having been suspected of being so.”

What had been the previous conversation I do not know, or whether it referred to me at all, or not; but the moment I advanced, Gabriel cut short his reply at the “Verily, now,” which was bursting from his lips, and the matter dropped.

Such was the state of my family, till the period when Emily attained her seventeenth and I my nineteenth year. Another year was to see her the bride of my brother; but events in the mean time had been taking place around us, which must be noticed before proceeding any farther, as they had a material influence on all my after-fate.

CHAPTER III.

NEVER yet, perhaps, in the history of this strange globe which we inhabit, had a private family, possessing considerable public influence, wealth, station, and repute, been suffered to enjoy such undisturbed tranquillity in the midst of the most tremendous civil strife, as that which we continued to possess during the wars of the great rebellion. Those errors in the government of Charles I. which my father had early seen and endeavoured to oppose, acting with the passions, the follies, and the bigotry of an excited people, had gradually arrayed one-half of the country against the other. Ambition, fanaticism, and patriotic as well as religious zeal had been too strong for gallant devotion and enthusiastic loyalty; the peculiar follies of the Puritans had invigorated themselves, and drawn many to their cause; while the peculiar follies of the Cavaliers had weakened their own party, and alienated their friends. Success had crowned the efforts of the rebels; and the unhappy monarch of England had by this time trusted to the Scots, and been sold to the English. Scarcely a nobleman in Great Britain had not drawn his sword in behalf of one or other of the contending parties, and yet Lord Masterton had been suffered to remain perfectly neuter, without annoyance from any of the factions which tore his distressed country.

The cause of this conduct, and the immunity which attended it, was to be found in various circumstances. When deprived of his office, and dismissed from the councils of the king nineteen years before, my father had been told by the monarch's own lips that he was discharged from his service for ever, and had been warned never to show himself in the sovereign's presence again. On that occasion, my father, in the bitterness of his heart, had vowed to obey to the letter; and never—whatever were the misfortunes which the conduct he had opposed might bring—to exert either his mental or corporal powers in behalf of a monarch he judged ungrateful.

With a man of my father's disposition, the oath itself not only remained binding under all circumstances, but the impressions under which it had been taken were never in the slightest degree effaced; and he beheld the whole progress of the calamities which fell both on Charles and his people with grief, indeed, but without one effort to support either of the parties into which the country had become divided.

There was a time in the civil war when the aid and influence of such a man might have turned the scale in favour of the king; and an officer of high station near the person of Charles visited my father about that period. No change, however, resulted from their conference. The officer and Lord Masterton parted with cold civility, and the house resumed its quiet.

To Charles himself the neutrality of Lord Masterton was of course far more favourable than his enmity; and as the king well knew that his sword, though not wielded in his favour, would never be drawn against him without some deep provocation, he took care that the most scrupulous respect should be paid to his property by the royal adherents in all parts of the country.

On the other hand, the commonwealth party had not forgotten that my father had been one of the first sufferers from opposing that extension of the prerogative which gave them their original ground of complaint. They

looked upon him, therefore, as in some sort a martyr to their own cause; and were at first in great hopes that he would openly espouse their side, in the hostilities which soon took place. Although disappointed in this, they too were glad to suffer him to remain neutral; and as he made no levies of armed retainers, and took no steps which could be regarded as military preparation, further than the defence of his own house and property required, they remained satisfied that that neutrality was sincere and unfeigned.

His former friendship with Fairfax greatly contributed to relieve my father from any of those military visitations which the parliamentary generals did not scruple to inflict upon all who were doubtful in their politics; and the situation of Masterton House, in a remote part of Devonshire and on the seacoast, removed it from the general line of march of the fanatical forces.

All these circumstances combined to afford us more perfect immunity from the troubles and disasters to which England in general was subject than perhaps any other house could boast. It is true that from time to time my father received a summons to attend the parliament at Westminster or at Oxford, and I have seen him so far moved as to take two slow and silent turns in the great hall before his determination seemed fixed; but never more. He always found some good and valid excuse for withholding his presence, and those anxieties passed away. It is true also that every day we heard of battles fought, of beleaguered cities, and of all the turns of the long and deadly struggle which tore the bosom of our country. But neither my brother nor myself were permitted to share any further in the strife than by offering our prayers for the king's success.

It was impossible to stand calmly by and witness all the exciting events which were passing around us, without feeling an ardent desire to take some part in the contest; and where is the youth who, in his eager gaze over the busy scene in which he has never mingled, does not attribute to himself powers and energies

to will and do far more than the might of man could ever accomplish? Oh how I dreamed of glory and of victory! and how sincerely I believed, that were my arm but free and a hundred stout troopers at my back, I could have turned the fate of any of the thousand fields that were fought and lost in the king's cause.

Nay, one day, I did the boldest thing that it was in my conception to do. I remonstrated with my father on the indifference to which he not only compelled himself, but me. It was not long before the fatal surrender of the monarch to the Scottish troops, and Lord Masterton happened to be in a far milder and more easy mood than he usually displayed. He had been talking to me with kindness and confidence, and the conversation naturally turned to the passing occurrences of the day. I spoke youthfully and ardently; and for some time my father listened with a smile, one of the very few I ever saw beam upon his lip. He even went further, and explained to me his views in regard to the result of the war. The king, he said, would soon be obliged to accede to the proposals of the parliament, and would then reassume the reins of government. The terms imposed would doubtless at first be hard enough, he said, but then, the more moderate of all parties, gradually recovering from the phrensy of civil strife, would soon unite with the true friends of the monarch to regain for him that full portion of power which ought to be intrusted to the chief magistrate for the benefit of the whole community.

His arguments, however, did not satisfy me. It seemed to me that the parties in the state were farther and farther dividing, instead of uniting; and that the only likely termination to their strife was in the extinction of the weaker. In the mean while I thought that the best blood of the country was being shed; her commerce, her agriculture, her arts were going to ruin, and a thousand evils were daily impressed by fate with the stamp of certainty, which no problematic benefits could ever outvalue, while he—and, as I believed, many

others—stood inactive when their influence might have terminated the struggle, and restored peace to England.

All this, and perhaps much more, I should probably have poured forth in the warmth of my feelings; but my father stopped me in full career. "Be satisfied, sir," he said, "that I shall do my duty to my country and to myself as becomes me; and if ever the time should come that the king be really in danger, as some men judge even now, you, Henry, and your brother shall have, not only liberty, but command, to peril all in defence of the monarchy."

He spoke sternly, and I was silent; but an adventure in which I was engaged not many months after served to hasten the period which was to see our family also enter with tardy steps the arena of civil contention.

On the morning of one fine day in the middle of June, I had laid out a scheme for taking Emily quite across the bay in my boat to visit the beautiful ruins of St. Helen's Abbey, which lay among the woods on the other side. Emily had agreed to make the excursion, the boat was prepared, and every thing promised us a day of pleasure, when my brother deranged our whole plan by asking whether Lady Emily Langleigh would not accompany him to fly his hawks on the banks of the stream. Emily at once assented; and I, mortified and angry, got up from the breakfast-table, where the proposal was made, and, descending to the court, ordered my horse, to ride away the irritation which my disappointment had occasioned. As I mounted I caught a glance of Emily, standing at one of the windows, and looking at me with an expression which I construed into a reproach for my hasty passion.

I spurred on my horse, however, and, followed by two servants, rode on towards Exeter, which lay at the distance of perhaps sixteen miles from Masterton House. Thither I often went, to gather news of the passing events; and I now took that road habitually. When riding or walking with Emily, no tortoise ever retarded its steps more than I was willing to do; but the moment I was alone, I instinctively put my horse

upon his quickest paces, and in three-quarters of an hour I was more than half-way to Exeter.

I had galloped up one hill and down another all the way, with my thoughts in a state of very unreasonable confusion; but about six miles from the city the road dives down a steep declivity on one side of the valley, and, after taking two or three turns among the trees of Bewley Wood, rises abruptly up the opposite ascent. By the time I had reached this spot my first impatience had evaporated, and I began the descent with somewhat more caution than I had hitherto thought necessary. The wind set towards me; and, as I descended, I heard some voices singing a psalm in the wood below, no unusual occurrence in those days. The very puritanical howl with which the singers poured forth their canticle turned me sick; and preparing myself to encounter some of their hypocritical impertinence as I passed, I rode on, mentally giving all the fanatics in England to the devil, by the way. Before I had turned the corner of the wood, the psalm had ceased, and I heard one untuneful throat admonishing another not to sing so loud.

"Verily, Habacuc, if thou pourest forth the song of rejoicing so vehemently," said the one, "the prey over which thou rejoicest shall escape from thy hand. Art thou not bidden to do all things in season?"

"Yea, verily!" answered the other: "but is it not written—'Rejoice, for God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand;' and do I not, even now, hear his horse's feet approaching?"

As he spoke, I turned the corner of the wood; and perceived, about fifty paces in advance, four men on horseback, with their backs towards me, and evidently watching for some one whom they expected to come from the opposite side. They were all clothed in stout buff coats, with large riding-boots, steeple hats, broadswords in their hands, and wide breeches of rough frieze; and it was plain that they were either—as they would themselves have called it—"bent upon spoiling the Egyptians, or leading some one away cap-

tive," which, in those days of disorder, was often done without any law or authority whatsoever.

The moment my horse had turned the angle of the wood, the clearness with which they distinguished his footfalls, showed Master Habacuc that his ears had deceived him, and that the sounds he heard were coming from a different quarter to that from which he had at first supposed they proceeded. All the horsemen instantly wheeled round, and reconnoitred my party with very suspicious looks; doubtless feeling many godly yearnings towards the gold which they saw upon my cloak, and that which, they doubted not, was in my purse. But those were times when no man rode unprepared: my two servants were armed up to the teeth, and I had my sword by my side, and my pistols at my saddle-bow; so that—what with the superiority of our horses and the better spirit in our hearts—we were more than a match for any four fanatics upon the earth. They made a movement as they saw me putting my horse into a canter, to let me pass; and without any ceremony I dashed through the midst of them, splashing them with the dirt from the little muddy river that there crossed the road.

No notice was taken of a rudeness which I cannot but confess was somewhat intentional; but as I passed I remarked that one of the party was much better mounted than the rest, and wore his hair long, though not absolutely in the floating fashion of the Cavaliers. His face I did not particularly notice in the rapidity of my course; and in a moment I had again turned the wood, and was ascending the opposite hill.

For half a mile farther I encountered nobody on the road, but a country girl with a basket of eggs; and I began to think that my fanatics in the valley would be disappointed of their prey, when I saw at some distance two horsemen coming quickly on, at a sharp trot, and seemingly deeply engaged in conversation. I perceived, as they approached, that they were both considerably advanced in life, and dressed very plainly, the one in black, the other in a dull brown. The first

was extremely dark in complexion. His hair and beard were as black as jet; and in person he was thin and bony, showing not a vestige of the red hue of health in his face. The other was far more florid, not corpulent, but stout, with mustachios, but no beard, while flowing from under his hat was a thing which, in those days, I had never seen; but which I afterward found to be a mass of false hair, called a periwig. The strangers looked up as they passed; and the second fixed his eyes upon me for a moment somewhat intently, then resumed his conversation with the other, and rode on.

I, too, suffered them to pass, doubting whether they could be the persons for whom the psalm-singers had been waiting in the valley, and endeavouring to determine if it would or would not be right to warn them of the danger. After a moment's thought, however, I drew up my horse, and galloped after them. The sound of his feet instantly made them stop. "I am afraid, gentlemen," said I, "that you may think me somewhat impertinent in thus detaining you; but I cannot let you pass without giving you a piece of information which may concern you. There may perhaps be danger before you."

"Sir, we consider your conduct politeness, not impertinence; and though somewhat accustomed to dangers, we rather differ from my good friend Monsieur de Marville, who, when he first saw a salmi de bécasse in the second course, declared that he loved to be taken by surprise."

Such was the reply of the more florid horseman; the darker one said not a word: and I proceeded to inform them of what I had seen and heard in the valley. The effect which my tidings produced on the countenance of each, at once showed me that they were by no means indifferent to the psalm-singing in the wood. In truth I never saw perplexity more completely displayed in the faces of any men, than it was in those of my two new companions. They looked at one another and at me for a moment or two in silence; and then the

one who had spoken exclaimed, "If we go back to Exeter, we are taken to a certainty!"

"If we go forward," replied the other, "we are but two men, nearly unarmed, against four well-armed ones: yet we had better risk it."

"Oh, certainly," said the first, at once resuming the light air with which he had been speaking before. "We have both risked somewhat more in our day, and therefore let us onward. Young gentleman, we thank you for your courtesy; but we must even go on to try how near akin these same fanatics are to ostriches, and whether they can digest cold iron."

"If the affair be likely to come to such arbitrament," answered I, "by your good leave, gentlemen, I will join myself to your party. Here are my two servants, as stout knaves as ever mounted a horse, and well armed. Five men may perchance overawe these black-birds of the wood; and, at all events, if they do not prevent strife, they will spare bloodshed, by bringing it sooner to an end."

"I thank you sincerely, sir," replied the stranger in black; "I have myself abandoned the trade of shedding blood, and follow a milder calling; yet those who force me to betake myself again to steel may have cause to rue the day they did so. I go now to seek the recovery of some property that was wrongfully taken from me; and my friend General St. Maur here, is kind enough, like you, to peril his own life to accompany me."

"Faith, there are few things, Du Tillet, that I would sooner peril," replied the old gentleman who had spoken first: "but let us proceed; and by the way this young gentleman may give us some knowledge of the politics of this neighbourhood."

To do so did not at all accord with my intentions; and therefore expressing both my unwillingness and my incapacity, I inquired what news of the king and the parliament in London.

Of both the strangers could afford me plenty of intelligence,—some certain, some problematic; but I

heard the whole tale of the king's surrender, and of the various manœuvres of the army and the parliament, as well as many a just, and too soon fulfilled prognostication of the fall of the monarchy, and the death of the monarch.

Such conversation soon brought us to the top of the hill; and beckoning forward the lackeys, I bade them stand to their arms—an order they were very willing to obey, where the puritans were concerned; for, either from hatred to my brother's worthy attendant Gabriel Jones, or from some other more general cause, a most universal detestation to all fanatics had spread itself throughout the dwellers in Masterton House.

We proceeded both slowly and cautiously on the descent into the wood below, for the psalm-singing had ceased; and as we never in those days attributed any thing like fair and open contest to the puritans, we doubted not that they had hid themselves among the trees to take our party by surprise. Much injustice in those respects did the Cavaliers do the fanatics, who—to say sooth, now that the party mania has gone by which once blinded my eyes—fought on most occasions with a bold, steady, and determined courage, which might have graced a better cause. In the present instance, also, we were completely deceived, for the moment we had turned the corner of the wood, we found the four godly worthies in their buff jerkins, planted in the same spot where I had left them. Each of my servants, as well as myself, had by this time pistol in hand; and my two new companions, being without firearms, had drawn their swords, so that we presented a somewhat formidable body.

As such the fanatics seemed to consider us, for they made no movement to give us the encounter half way, as I had expected; and I could see heads brought close together, to confer in a whisper; probably in regard to the apparition of so many, when they had expected but two. Nevertheless, they remained drawn up across the road, and a moment after, their pistols also were brought forth from their holsters, and it be-

came evident that hard blows were to be the order of the day.

I had not for my own part the slightest unwillingness to bring the matter to such a decision; but yet, as they stood there motionless on the very path we were to take, I confess I would have much preferred to give spurs to my horse, and force my way through at full gallop, rather than quietly ride up, and enter the strife with calm premeditation. My two companions, however, chose the latter method of proceeding, and without hurrying our pace in the least, we approached slowly till we almost touched our opponents.

At that moment Monsieur du Tillet, as his friend had called him, fixing his eye sternly upon the least fanatical in dress of the other party, whose appearance I have before described, exclaimed in a deep imperative voice, "Clear the way!" and pushed his horse forward towards him.

The other instinctively made a movement to obey, but instantly recovering himself, he replied, "Stop thou rather, man of Belial, and yield thyself to the servants of the Lord!"

At the same moment, he who had been called Habacuc, addressed himself to me, exclaiming, "What doest thou here, young man, consorting with the children of unrighteousness, and the priests of Baal,—the worshippers of the harlot who sitteth on the seven hills? Verily I say unto thee, thy father and thy father's house have been suffered too long in the land. Ye shall be cast out, root and branch, if ye separate not yourselves from the followers of the beast, who would bring the abomination of desolation to sit in the holy places of our Israel."

All this passed in a moment, and while the mouth of Habacuc was still filled with the harlot and the beast, I heard the stern voice of Du Tillet repeat, "Clear the way! Walter Dixon, clear the way! or I will clear it for myself, as I have done of old, I tell thee!"

"And I tell thee thou shalt never see her more," re-

plied the other, dropping at once his fanatical snuffle. "Take that to settle all!" and levelling the pistol he had in his hand towards Du Tillet's head, he fired. The ball whistled past my ear innocuous, and Walter Dixon, after a moment's pause to see the effect of his shot, drew his sword and urged his charger against his adversary. Their blades crossed, and at the end of two or three lightning-like passes, the pseudo-puritan was rolling in the dust, while his horse ran masterless up the hill.

At the same time Habacuc had spurred forward upon me; but we were both, I believe, unwilling to use the same deadly arms with which our companions were contending, and while he strove to grasp my collar and pull me off my horse, I struck him on the head with the butt-end of my pistol, a blow which drove in his steeple-crowned hat, and laid him on the ground beside his comrade. The other two buff-jackets fled manfully from the gentleman in the periwig aided by my two servants, one of whom could not refrain from firing a shot at the rotund nether man of a flying enemy, who escaped, however, unhurt; while we on our part, without staying, Achilles-like, to spoil the fallen, rode forward at full speed, and were soon far from the scene of strife.

What to be done next, now became the question. I felt myself called upon by every principle of hospitality to invite the two strangers to take shelter at Masterton House; and the very particular inquiries which General St. Maur made concerning all the noblemen in the neighbourhood, but more especially my father, led me to imagine that such an invitation was expected. To ask any one to Lord Masterton's dwelling, however, without his command to that effect, was quite out of the question. I dared as well have struck my hand off; and, obliged to refrain, I rode on with very hospitable feelings at my heart, but with manners, I am afraid, somewhat cold and disagreeable, from the restraint I was forced to put upon myself. Had my companions continued their route past the gates of the park,

I should have found myself still more embarrassed ; but fortunately, at the first turning of the road, they relieved me from my difficulty, by thanking me for my warning and assistance, and bidding me farewell.

“ We must forward at full speed,” said General St. Maur ; “ and now all that we will ask of you, my young friend, is, that you will let one of your servants ride a hundred yards with us on this road, to puzzle our pursuers if they try to trace us by our horses’ footmarks. Your man can easily clear yon hedge and cross that field, so as to join you on the other road.”

I consented willingly ; and, with those contradictory feelings which so frequently torment us in our passage through life, I gladly saw two men depart in whom I was beginning to take a great interest, and of whom I would willingly have seen more.

My next consideration was whether I should, or should not, tell my father the adventure I had met with at all ; and I fancied I could see his calm, cold eye while I related what had happened, and the expression of total want of sympathy with the motives under which I had acted, which his countenance would assume as I narrated the occurrences of the morning.

I do not know what it is that stern men gain ; but beyond a doubt, I had a thousand minds not to tell him a word, and let after-events take their chance ; but reflecting that such conduct would be cowardly, I summoned resolution, and on my arrival walked directly to his library.

He was reading when I entered, and for a moment read on ; but then, raising his eyes, he noticed me with an ominous “ What is it, sir ?”

How I got through my story does not much matter, and I do not very well know ; but from the pure fright of the narrator, it became a long one, comprising a thousand particulars which might as well have been left out. My father did not help me in the least ; but listened on, with the most imperturbable patience, and the most unmoved silence. Nevertheless, I got through

it at length ; and then stood before him ready for martyrdom.

“Habacuc ?” he said, when I had concluded : “that must be Habacuc Grimstone, the Exeter magistrate—we shall soon hear more ;” and he dropped his eyes to his book again.

Glad to be so easily relieved of my tale, I was quitting the room, when Lord Masterton again looked up, and there was an expression of greater energy in his countenance than I had heretofore seen. “Do not suppose, Harry,” he said, “that I blame you for what you have done ; it may—and must—hurry on the necessity of measures which I have for some days seen I shall be obliged ultimately to take. Personally, you acted well and with spirit ; although your interference in favour of two obscure royalists—for such must these two men be—will probably force me into a rupture with the fanatics sooner than I had intended. The army hold the king like an eagle in a cage, whom they will teach to strike the game for them if they can ; but if the royal bird prove refractory, they will wring off his head. All good men are arming in his favour ; and doubtless a slight display of force in his behalf, may compel his enemies to grant him such terms as will become him to accept. My own oath is registered against the service of an ungrateful king ; but your brother and yourself shall be free to draw the sword in his defence as soon as I have provided that your swords shall not want support. Now leave me.”

I gladly obeyed, pleased and flattered by a degree of confidence which my father had never before evinced towards me. In the evening a letter arrived from Habacuc Grimstone, which, as a party nearly concerned, Lord Masterton thought fit to show me, as well as his answer. The epistle of the fanatic magistrate was full of hypocritical insolence and unmannerly threats. He detailed my adventure of the morning after his own fashion, and demanded that I should be sent to Exeter, to await in prison the sentence of God’s saints upon me.

My father's reply was cool and politic. Doubting that Habacuc had any higher authority than his own for the arrest of two fugitives, he merely answered that he had already reprimanded his son for his juvenile frolic of which he accused him; and he informed the puritan, that if he would send up to him as the superior magistrate, the warrant from the council of state for the arrest of the two persons whose evasion from justice his son, he said, had favoured, he would be responsible for its due execution. Further, he begged to inquire of Mr. Habacuc Grimstone, why he, a worthy and God-fearing man, had endeavoured to pull his son from horseback, by the collar, before his son had given him any provocation; and he desired the magistrate to be ready to make his questions thereon, when he should answer his next monthly visitation to Exeter.

There being no force of any kind at Exeter at that time, the fanatic was fain not only to keep quiet but to make some sort of concessions, especially as we afterward discovered that he had acted without any authority from the council of state. He took good care, however, to denounce my father as a malignant, against the effects of which denunciation Lord Masterton made preparations which must be spoken of more fully.

CHAPTER IV.

No bustle, no clamour, no spurring here and there announced to the world that Lord Masterton was preparing to take part in the general risings of the country, which the king's prolonged imprisonment and the increasing demands of the parliament had occasioned. In the first instance, my brother's servant, the saintly Gabriel Jones, was despatched with what he and the whole of the rest of the family conceived to be a private letter to Lord Capel, concerning a junction of our forces

with his. The epistle, however, was afterward found among that nobleman's papers, and proved to be an earnest and positive request, that his lordship would abstain from all military efforts in favour of the imprisoned king. Whether Lord Capel had been prepared beforehand to receive it, and the whole business was merely a *ruse* to get the valet whom we all suspected of treachery out of the way, without the risk which would have been incurred by discharging him, I do not know; but at all events it answered that purpose; and Gabriel, who was absent three times the number of days which was necessary for his journey, probably carried to the council of state a letter which completely calmed them in regard to the proceedings of my father.

Every tenant on the estate was well known in regard to his principles; and many of the farmers' sons had joined the royalist forces on former occasions. Several indeed had been made prisoners by the parliamentary troops, and only owed their deliverance from the terrible fate of being sold to slavery by their conquerors, to the influence of my father's name. Such as had served before, were appointed to drill as speedily as possible those who had not, in very small parties, choosing remote places in the woods, or on the sands; while many a moonlight review on the lawns near the house, completed the discipline of the troops we were raising, as far as discipline could be attained in our circumstances. Each farmer taught his horse to stand fire in his own stable; and each kitchen over the whole estate became a practising hall for the broadsword.

Arms and accoutrements were not wanting; but these, as well as our communications from other royalists in different parts of the country, were conveyed by sea. By the same means a considerable body of tenantry, from our family estates in Dorsetshire, were brought to Masterton House; so that at the end of a month, besides the number necessary to keep the house during our absence, we could muster nearly five hundred men, ready to march, well armed and mounted,

and far better disciplined than most of the Cavalier regiments of the day.

My father still adhered to his determination of never drawing his sword for the monarch who had disgraced him. He would defend Masterton House, he said, to the last, if it were attacked; but he would not march from its hearth for a king who neither deserved nor desired his service. The regiment we had privately raised was called my brother's; but one troop of a hundred men was especially intrusted to me by my father; and, in our midnight reviews, I took a pride in rendering it more perfect and accurate in all the manœuvres than the rest. Indeed, although in point of talent and skill, my brother was far better qualified to command than myself, there was many a young yeoman who would have willingly volunteered into Master Harry's troop, after its roll was full. One circumstance, however, surprised me not a little, which was, that my father insisted I should reserve one saddle for Gabriel Jones, my brother's servant, whose natural place seemed near his master's person. This was afterward explained to Frank in my hearing.

"Your valet, Frank," said Lord Masterton, in speaking on the subject, "is, as you know, a most notorious villain. He was given to me by Fairfax, who—as honest a block of living stone as this world ever produced—thought that he was conferring a signal favour on my family, by introducing into it a fellow that could exquisitely dress hair, tie a point, or cut a rose for a shoe, and yet could edify us all by the unction of his saintly doctrine. I know him for a spy; and yet I send him with you, because, as you are going suddenly to a strange part of the world, where his means of communication will be cut off, he cannot do the harm he could here: yet I put him into Harry's troop, that he may have a watchful eye upon him in the field, and during the march, while you, Frank, can keep him always near you, at other times, in his capacity of valet."

Such an explanation from my father, who seldom

gave an explanation of any thing he thought right to be done, was of course quite sufficient to satisfy me, and more than sufficient to satisfy my brother, who received his parent's commands with even more unquestioning obedience than myself.

All our arrangements, however, were nearly complete before Master Gabriel Jones thought fit to return, and had we not been forced to wait for news from Lord Norwich, and from Hales, who were actively preparing the insurrection of Kent, that worthy would have been obliged to march within two days after his arrival. Even during the seven days that we were thus compelled to pause, he was watched so narrowly by all the household, that he only contrived to absent himself for a part of one day, which he spent in visiting Exeter. That city indeed was, for the time, no place of great safety for a puritan of any cast. The parliamentary committee which sat there for Devonshire, had been forced to betake themselves to Exmouth, and multitudes of people parading the streets, menaced with death every Roundhead they met, shouting, "God and the king! God and the king!" before all the principal public buildings.

This news was brought by Gabriel himself; and a somewhat sudden and suspicious change made itself manifest in his political opinions from that moment; as he assured his master, that his heart was moved with compassion and sympathy, on hearing the poor suffering people so exclaim from their very bowels, to be restored to the ancient rule under which they had lived in peace and happiness.

Frank, however, was not a person to be taken in by sudden conversions; and he noticed the present one to me, in his calm but bitter manner, which was always the more potent, because he seemed rather to repress than encourage the sneering turn of his lip that accompanied involuntarily some even of his kindest speeches.

"My knave Gabriel pities the king," he remarked, "almost as much as you do, Harry; and he is enthu-

siastic too, as you are. Watch him well, therefore, on the road, like a good boy; and as you will most likely understand each other's character, if you see any symptoms of his loving the king so well as to wish to see him at the Isle of Wight, or to consult for his safety with the parliament in London, just send a pistol-ball through his head. Or, if you be afraid, I will do it, with good will."

To our surprise, however, Gabriel Jones showed no unwillingness to accompany us on our expedition; and having served in the army in former days, proved himself an active and ready trooper as any in the regiment.

At length the expected letter from Lord Norwich arrived, and it was determined to begin our march the same night. Then came the most painful affair of all, the parting. The excitement and bustle of preparation had hitherto covered over all that was to be apprehended in the expedition on which we were bound—all that was dark—all that was sorrowful. Hope, a goddess that previously lives in activity, had promised every thing fair and glorious as the result of our expedition; but at the moment of parting, a thousand dim shadowy fears rose up between us and hope, like storm clouds rolling over the bright moon. Success, or death, or exile, were the only alternatives which the fortunes of those days afforded to such as mingled in the eager struggle of civil war. The block and the axe, the prison, the deadly platoon, were dooms for those who yielded; and, as is ever the case in intestine strife, cruelty and revenge took the robe and sword which equity and justice had cast down in their flight. To us, who reflected, a thousand fearful spectres gibbered in the obscure vista of the future; and the gay unthinking mirth of the good yeomen who followed us, was envied by their more mental lords.

My brother and myself were quitting our paternal hearth for the first time, and that for the purpose of sharing in the most bloody strife that ever disfigured our native land. The conviction, therefore, could not

but arise in our bosoms, that youth's epoch of peace and happiness was past, and that, even at the best, all which now lay before us, was the turbulent struggle of manhood, and the decrepit feebleness of age. At the same time a host of dangers, difficulties, cares, and disappointments—the brood of that shapeless monster Probability—barked at our heels, as we set out from the threshold of what had hitherto been our home.

From my father we parted almost in silence. A few stern words of injunction, counsel, and warning,—the sterner because they covered deeper and softer feelings,—were all that he ventured. From Emily, the parting was more painful still. My father sent us forth and shared our motives; but Emily could not comprehend why any man should leave home, and peace, and happiness, to risk the breaking of his dearest ties, to stake his life upon an uncertain cast, to peril fortune, hope, and the future, to shed his own blood, and spill his fellow-creatures'.

She stood upon the steps of the door, while the servants held the horses and a torch. My brother took leave of her first, and simply shook hands with her. I thought that their relative situation and our near intimacy might have ventured more; but, of course, I could not exceed the measure of her promised husband's familiarity, and I, too, merely pressed her hand. I could see the tears streaming from her eyes by the red torch-light; and as my fingers closed thrilling upon hers, with a sensation that ran through my whole frame, I could see the blood mount up into her beautiful cheek, fade away again, like the sunshine withdrawing from an evening cloud as the wind wafts it afar; and the next moment she reeled and would have fallen, had she not caught the iron balustrade for support.

My brother was by this time on his horse; I sprang down the steps and followed. A little farther on was the regiment in marching order; the torch was extinguished, the word was given, and in a few minutes we were winding along through the narrow, dark avenue, with hearts somewhat sadder than we had expected the day before.

The conduct of the march had of course been given to my brother ; and the plans of the approaching efforts in the king's favour, had been communicated to him as far as Lord Holland and Lord Norwich had thought prudent. I was not so far trusted, only knowing that we were to advance with all speed to effect our junction with Goring and Hales in Kent ; and if prevented from doing so, to fall back upon Wales, which had already raised the royal standard. In either case, a long and difficult march was before us, where dangers were innumerable and difficulties immense. Activity, however, was every thing, for the whole hopes of Lord Norwich were founded on the reinforcements which had been promised him from different parts of the country, and of which our regiment formed a very considerable part.

To do my brother Frank but bare justice, never did the most experienced commander conduct his march with more skill and expedition than marked our advance. His object was to avoid all encounters till he had joined Goring,* but nevertheless to cut through every obstacle till he had effected that junction ; and so well did he contrive his route that, for five days, we met with no opposition whatever. His means of information, arranged with that skill and clearness which he displayed in every thing and on all occasions, never left him without a complete knowledge of each hostile party that hovered about the country. Not a local magistrate moved, not a body of militia was ordered out but he had early notice ; and at the same time he took care that no tidings of any of our intended motions should reach the enemy, for neither soldier nor officer of the whole regiment knew, on beginning his day's march, where his halting-place would be at night.

At length, one morning, at the little village of Barford, where we had halted the evening before, we received information that a large body of the parliamentary troops had arrived the day before at Salisbury ;

* George Goring, Lord Norwich ; for a fuller account of whom, see Clarendon's Hist., vol. vi. pages 56, 58, &c.—Ed. 1826.

and, as we were just about to march, we learned that in expectation of our advance, Hornsby, who commanded them, had taken a position on the other side of the Wily bourne, which runs between Fisherton and Wilton. The number of the enemy was said to be two thousand; and, making all allowance for exaggeration, this was deemed by far too superior a force to encounter if it could be avoided. Striking off, therefore to the left, we made a movement upon Amesbury; and, advancing as rapidly as possible, soon reached a spot where the high-road winding round a hill passed along the side of the ascent, leaving a deep, wooded hollow below, with a wide plain beyond, which was again broken by a Roman camp and various ancient tumuli. On the right-hand of the hill lay the line of another road, old, steep, and narrow; and which appeared to have been disused in favour of the better path on the left; but as this seemed the most private and concealed, Frank determined upon following it, till we had passed the dangerous part of our march.

This resolution, however, was shaken, as he and I advanced a little before the head of the regiment, by seeing a horseman ride slowly on before us. We instantly paused to remark him, and a moment after we saw him halt, dismount, advance towards an angle of the road, and while his horse, seemingly taught to such manœuvres, stood stock still, he pressed himself close up against a bank, and appeared to examine cautiously the country beyond the turn of the hill.

A moment satisfied him, and returning as quietly as he had advanced, he mounted his charger, and putting him on the turf at the side, rode speedily back. The sight of my brother and myself, however, with the head of the regiment, which was now beginning to appear behind us, seemed to startle him; and he again drew in his rein; but immediately after spurred forward as if to accost us.

Every step that he took in advance, his figure became more familiar to my memory. For an instant, indeed, I could not tell where I had seen him, but be-

fore he was close up with us I had just time to say, "Have a care, Frank! have a care! This is that Walter Dixon whom I found consorting with the fanatics in Bewley Wood."

It was indeed the same person. He was paler than when I before saw him; and the sleeve of his coat, which was no longer of buff, but of good morone cloth, was cut up at the back, and tied with black ribands, as if to give space for the dressing of a wound. He seemed to have full use of his arm, however, and apparently suffered little inconvenience from the injury he had formerly received.

"Halt your troop, gentlemen! For God's sake, halt your troop, if ye be friends of King Charles," he exclaimed, as he came near. "The right of Hornsby's cavalry is resting on the little wood at the end of that road; and if ye advance ye are cut to pieces."

Frank eyed him from head to foot with no very cordial glance. "You seem mightily afraid of fanatics, good sir," he replied, "considering the society in which my brother last had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Without your brother could know, sir," replied the other, with perfect calmness, "what were my motives for concerting with fanatics for the time, neither he nor you can judge whether I have reason to fear them or not. However, there is no room now for wasting words. We shall have reconnoitring parties on us soon. If you come minded to give Hornsby battle, on! you will find him straight before you. But if ye be sane men, and with your handful here would avoid an encounter with an enemy that more than trebles your numbers, follow me down into the valley."

"Hold, sir," replied my brother, "this matter is not so easily settled. You are either a friend or an enemy. If the former, you shall have my thanks, when I have proved you. If the latter, you are a spy, and seek to deceive us; and the meed of such conduct is death. Take four troopers, Harry, ride down with this fair gentleman on the road he proposes to leg^h us. If you find all clear, send back one of the men to me. I will

wait under the hill. If you find he betrays you, send a ball through his head and ride back with all speed."

"You use scanty ceremony, sir," replied Walter Dixon, with a frown.

"I have no time to be polite, sir," answered Frank; "but doubtless my brother, who is of a more courtly nature, if he finds you false, will make you a bow when he blows your brains out."

"Well, it matters not!" replied the other: "it is not you I serve." A few words more of such altercation ensued, but our new companion was fain to obey; and, accompanied by myself and four of my troop, he rode down a narrow path into a wood that skirted the bottom of the hill.

"Why not take the road over the plain?" demanded I, as we proceeded. — "This would be a sweet spot for cavalry to be attacked. Jump down and beat yon bushes, William Fells."

The stranger smiled:—"Do not be so suspicious, young gentleman," he said. "When last I met you, I had my own purposes to answer, in consorting with Habacuc Grimstone and his companions. It might be interest, it might be safety, it might be revenge, that made me use them; but I have no such motives now. I do not take the road over the plain, because I know every inch of this county: and I am sure, from that knowledge, that Hornsby's troopers on the elbow of the hill could see a curlew fly from any one barrow to the other, far more a regiment of cavalry wearing King Charles's colours. Now, if you remark, this belt of wood would cover the march of two thousand men, till opening out safe yonder, on the Amesbury road, far out of sight of the enemy, it leaves Hornsby and his Roundheads in the rear, watching till nightfall for what will never come. Do you see my reason now?"

What he said was plausible; and I remembered his exclamation when about to fire at Du Tillet,—"Thou shalt never see her more," which certainly corroborated the idea that some personal motive, very distinct from political party, had united him for the time with the

purhans. I was resolved to trust to nothing but my own eyes, however; and accordingly proceeded onward till we regained the high road, where I could see for more than a mile, on every side, without the possibility of ambush. I then confessed myself satisfied; and thanking the stranger for his courtesy, despatched a trooper to inform my brother of the result.

"I suppose, then, that now you have no objection to my proceeding on my way?" demanded my companion, "for with four armed men round me, of course I must obey their commands."

I acknowledge his question embarrassed me not a little; for, after the proof he had just given of his sincerity, to doubt him farther was an insult; and yet, I could not entirely divest my mind of a suspicion that he might have some latent motive in his desire to proceed, to which it might be detrimental for us to yield.

He remarked the thoughtful pause which these feelings occasioned, with a smile; "Well, well," said he, "if you have no authority to release me, it matters little. My business is not so urgent as that it may not tarry for half an hour; and now I bethink me, for guiding you thus safely, I shall ask leave to travel under your escort for some short way."

Of all sorts of hypocrisy—and God knows there is a lamentable number in this world—the affectation of frankness is the surest birdlime for a green youth. Prepossessed as I was against Master Walter Dixon, the easy boldness of his manner, supported as it appeared by one instance of evident good service, went far to do away all prejudices; and after assuring him, on my own responsibility, that he would be free to accompany or to quit us, I remained in conversation with him till my brother and the rest of our force came up.

During that pause he turned the conversation himself to our former rencounter. "Although I can hardly speak of it with patience," he said, "for your interference cut me off from my only chance of revenging a

base injury, yet I think it worth while to explain how I—who was never a puritan or a parliamentary even before that party's late barefaced rejection of all decency—how I came to make use of my good cousin Habacuc Grimstone for the arrest of that villain whose name shall not imbitter my lips. That old man with whom you were consorting," he continued, "who, God knows, should long ago have done with such toys, must needs, some five years since, become my rival with a young lady promised to me by every vow, but that of marriage, which can bind woman to man. He injured me deeply, and I vowed revenge, nor have I ever forgotten that vow. He stepped in between me and what should have been mine, and I resolved that he should pay dearly for so doing. Years have passed over and he was long a sojourner in another land, but I did not forget my vow, even while his steps were afar; and he was well watched for me, when I could not watch him myself. But here come the troopers—I have only further to say that I heard of his landing in England, marked my occasion, but found him accompanied by another. I then joined with Habacuc, to take him as a malignant, a Catholic, and a traitor. I heed not who knows it—my desire was revenge, however obtained. I hoped indeed that my own arm might deal the blow—but even if I failed or fell, I thought myself sure that he would suffer—when your cursed interference saved him, and nearly ruined me; for the royalist papers found on my person during my sickness from the wound I then received, caused me to be denounced as a bitter malignant, and my escape is next to a miracle."

He spoke quickly, to conclude his story before the arrival of my brother, who was now coming rapidly up at the head of the regiment. This tale, however, brief as it was, greatly changed my opinion of my momentary acquaintance Du Tillet, and I would fain have had Frank say something to do away the rude suspicion which we had both manifested towards our new comrade. But my brother, whether from shyness

or what other cause, I know not, while he could give a command with clearness and force, or reason on a proposition at length, or point a reply with the most bitter sarcasm, could never bring himself to ask a favour or offer a compliment, or even express a kindly feeling, with graceful ease. I have indeed seen moments which I shall have to notice more hereafter, when the emotions of his heart overcame reserve, and burst forth with splendid energy; but without they were excited to a high pitch, they seemed rather to embarrass than to support him; and I heard him once say that his head could always take care of itself, but his heart was the greatest bungler he ever met with.

On the present occasion he found that he had done the stranger some wrong, and would willingly have offered an apology; but what he said was lame and impotent enough.

"Mention it not! mention it not!" said Walter Dixon, who seemed to have talked himself into good-humour. "If you carried caution almost into folly, the loss had nearly been your own."

His request was then made that he might be permitted to take advantage of the march of our cavalry, which was readily granted,—my brother, nevertheless, taking the precaution to ask how far we were to be honoured with his company.

"Not very far, in faith," replied Walter Dixon. "We shall part probably at Basingstoke; for I cut across the country by Milford and Horsham into Kent, and you are bound for Essex, I hear."

Frank, with his usual caution, replied nothing; and inwardly resolving to take advantage of the stranger's knowledge of the country as far as possible, left him still in perfect ignorance of his route.

Walter Dixon, however, gained upon my brother's esteem. There was a ready boldness in his demeanour that soon put Frank at his ease; and a somewhat rude method of opposing every thing that was said to him, which soon involved him in a logical dispute with

my brother, and left them the best friends in the world. To say the truth, I began to esteem more than to like him; for his bluntness was sometimes rather offensive. He would scoff at things that all sects held sacred, and with a sort of keen and cutting rapidity, seemed to go direct to the point of his argument, without any reverence to prejudices or feelings. Nevertheless, to make up, though few propositions met his assent, and though he had a most merciless disregard for the opinion of others, he generally contrived to leave you tolerably well satisfied with yourself, by extolling those virtues or talents of which you fancied yourself possessed.

Whether this was casual or intentional I know not; but I soon remarked that one range of human qualities formed the subject of his praise to my brother, and another to myself, though Heaven knows we neither of us could say he flattered us. Thus he proceeded for several days, growing upon our regard. At Basingstoke, Master Dixon appeared somewhat surprised when he learned our intention of following (for some part of the way at least) the same road with himself; assured my brother that he was very wrong in leading his troops into Kent; and declared that, to the best of his judgment, the only stand which the royalists could hope to make successfully would be in Essex. Nevertheless he sneered at men who could be changed by every breath of opinion, and laughed at the shrewdness with which Frank had deceived him in regard to the direction of his march, observing, "I am not so easily gulled in general."

We met with no opposition on our march, after leaving Amesbury, till we reached an open common near East Grinstead, where we encountered a large party of militia, drawn up on a rise, with rather a formidable aspect. It was the *coup d'essai* of almost every person present; and I cannot but confess, that, without the slightest fear, my heart beat both quick and hard, as my eye ran over the bristling line of pikes which bade fair to wait our charge with all the patience in the

world. After a few sentences of encouragement, my brother gave the word, and on we went against them at full speed; but it so happened that the militiamen were a great deal more raw and inexperienced than ourselves. They waited with white faces, and jostling shoulders, till we came within about twenty paces of their line; then throwing down their pikes to a man, they took to their heels; and, in a body, dashed over a hedge and ditch, near which they had been placed with a view to guard their flank. Only one man was killed, and only one wounded on the occasion. The first was an unfortunate parliamentarian, who seemed rooted to the spot with surprise when he recognised Master Dixon, who charged by my side at the head of the troop.

I could just hear that he was pouring forth an objuration in which the words, "Master Dixon! Master Dixon!" were predominant, ere he prepared to run with his fellows; but the person he addressed made his horse bound forward three or four yards before the regiment, and exclaiming, "Take that to stop your babbling," dealt him a blow which bit many an inch into his skull.

The only person wounded was my brother; the fleshy part of whose arm was slightly injured by a pistol-ball, which the commander of the militia thought himself bound to discharge, before he headed his men in the rapid evolution with which they cleared the hedge, and dispersed over the country.

For fear of the reunion of our flying enemy, and their junction with other bodies of the parliamentary troops, which we heard of in the neighbourhood of East Grinstead, we marched on for nearly sixteen miles farther, towards Lamberhurst, where Master Dixon assured us we might halt in security. As the horses were tired, however, we determined to pause at a little sequestered village on the way, which offered a picture of peace and tranquillity, unspeakably refreshing after the toils, anxieties, and cares of a long and difficult march, through a country wasted with civil war, and replete with strife. 5*

CHAPTER V.

THE scene in which we halted was peculiarly English; many lands and many beautiful spots have I visited since, without seeing any thing in the least like it, and yet it is difficult to tell wherein the particular distinction lay.

Winding down the slope of an easy hill, the smooth broad road opened out upon a village green, with its large glistening pond shaded by tall elms, several clumps of which were scattered round. Forty or fifty neat cottages surrounded the green; and a long row of plain white houses went skirting down by the side of the road as it pursued its onward way into the country beyond. On the left-hand, as we descended, rose the spire of the church from a group of immemorial trees, whose rounded masses broke beautifully the somewhat heavy architecture of the body of the building; and, about half a mile distant, on the right, in the full light of the evening sun, appeared a large and lordly dwelling, surrounded by the deep woods which crowned a wide sloping lawn, only separated from the village by a thick brick wall. Farther still, beyond, through an opening left between the trees and the hill, rose a high rocky piece of ground, covered by the gray ruins of an old feudal castle; and there seemed, to the eye of fancy, a moral propriety in the arrangement of the whole scene, that enhanced its beauty. The cottages gathered round the foot of the more wealthy dwelling,—that dwelling itself rising out of the midst of them,—the house of prayer standing near at hand; and far beyond the gray and crumbling fragments of feudal tyranny, commenting on the change of days, and monumenting the evils of the past. The whole had a vague reference to the state of society which existed.

before the civil war broke out, and perhaps the image was the more pleasing to me from its very indistinctness.

Probably the difference between the aspect of England and that of every other land may consist more in the appearance of contented industry than in any thing else—and that industry evinced, not in the actual exertions one witnesses, but in their results. The neatness of the cottage, however lowly, the pains bestowed to render it clean, the ornamental plants, however simple, which are taught to give a grace to the humblest dwelling, and a thousand other things which bespeak habitual activity and care, all breathe the spirit of willing, healthful, happy exertion, betokening that best of intellectual gifts, contentment,—that sweet calm sunshine of existence, compared with which the brightest wit is but a flash, the purest of ambitions but a dream indeed. No, no! there is but one ambition that is worth a hope, and it lies beyond the grave.

The whole scene spoke comfort and repose. It was so calm it might have been almost sad, had not half a dozen merry voices risen up and mingled not unmelodious with the notes of the blackbird pouring from the trees on the hill.

As we came down, all the villagers were turned out to see us approach; and the fearlessness with which they did so confirmed what the appearance of the place had before announced, that its remote and sequestered situation had sheltered it completely from the storm of civil war. We were welcomed gladly, for we found that the population were loyalists at heart; and retiring into the little public house, my brother and myself proceeded to allot our men to the different villagers and farmers, who, as we had no tents, undertook readily to house our troopers in barns and lofts, and to receive the officers in their own dwellings.

We here, for the first time, heard news of Lord Norwich, who was, it appeared, within twenty miles of us;

but Walter Dixon, who was now about to leave us, brought in a peasant who had seen the parliamentary force under Major General Skippon, partially interposed between us and the Cavaliers. At first Dixon strongly counselled my brother to make a bold push, and try to cut his way through Skippon's corps; but afterward changed his opinion, on learning that the parliamentary force amounted to near five thousand men: and agreed with Frank and the other officers that it would be better to communicate with Lord Norwich or Hales, previous to taking any rash step, especially as by forced marches we had arrived at least three days before we could be expected. As soon as this was settled Dixon took leave of us, with many a profession of regard; promising at the same time, if he could obtain any intelligence as he passed towards Canterbury, to make every effort to send it to us; and whenever he had concluded the business on which he went, to return and join us with what men he might be able to collect.

The next proceeding was—much against his own liking—to cut the hair of my servant, William Fells, to clothe him in a plain suit of gray, and to despatch him to find out Lord Norwich. Though a resolute fellow, and as shrewd as the north wind, we did not trust him with any written communication; but merely charged him to tell the general of our arrival, and to bring us further orders with all speed. He did not depart however forthwith; and so great a change had the sanctification of his apparel wrought on my man, that I hardly knew him when, after a few minutes' absence, he came up to me, as I was standing alone, and begged to speak with me for a moment.

“So please you, sir,” said he, after some circumlocutions, “far be it from me to speak ill of my fellow-servants—far less my fellow-soldiers; but I cannot help hoping your honour will look after Master Gabriel Jones. There is no harm, I dare say, in Master Walter Dixon either; but he and Jones have had a full

hour's talk every night since first we joined us; and they had a short one too before Master Dixon went this evening. I know of no evil, certainly; but perchance your honour may look to the matter. I did not like to speak to the colonel, for he is so stern-like; neither, indeed, was it my place: but your honour being captain of the troop—"

All servants have—I have remarked—a wonderful pleasure in revealing useful information, when it is too late; though they take care to conceal every thing they see amiss while their information can be of any service to their masters. I was therefore obliged to take the tidings William Fells gave me, without grumbling, though he had been silent till Walter Dixon's departure rendered them of no great value.

"Well, well! William, I will look to it," I replied; and accordingly, as the only means of turning the information I had received to any account, before the day was half an hour older I called Master Gabriel to me, and asked him suddenly the nature of his conversation that evening with our late companion. I thought I could distinguish at first a certain rosy hue springing up in that worthy's cheeks, unlike their usual sallow tint, and rather indicative of detection! but, whether he had any thing to conceal or not, Gabriel Jones was never at fault for a lie; and looking up in a moment with a placid expression of benign satisfaction, he replied:—

"I was giving him the receipt for the salve, sir—praised be God, that made me the humble instrument of helping a fellow-creature; and, moreover, one who, though once a bitter malignant, is now disposed worthily to restore the monarchy upon a reasonable and restricted basis, like your honour and other well-disposed persons. I could say something upon that score, if your honour were inclined to listen—something touching the kingdom of Christ. I could pour forth manna and fatness—salve—not alone such as that which heals the wounds of the flesh, like that which nightly I applied to the shoulder of sweet Walter Dixon; but salve

that cures the bruised spirit. I could—yea, verily, I could—”

“Stop, stop! good Gabriel,” interrupted I, “pour it not forth upon me; for, at present, neither is my spirit bruised, nor is my stomach disposed for manna or fatness; but rather follow to the public house, since all things are prepared to guard against surprise, and serve your master, who is there, probably waiting for his dinner with as keen an appetite as I have.”

Gabriel ventured no reply; but, casting up his eyes with that mingled look of pitying contempt and self-righteous sorrow which is ever the refuge of the fanatic and hypocrite when he cannot or dare not answer, he followed to the house of general entertainment, and prepared to do the office of carver, which had been imposed upon him since we left Masterton House, partly from the scantiness of unemployed attendants—partly to keep the worthy valet’s talents for intrigue out of mischief by sufficient occupation. On the present occasion, however, before the table was cumbered with the *pabulum* whereon to exercise his arm, a strange servant appeared in rich but tasteful livery, craving, with soft and well-tutored inflections, to speak with Colonel Masterton, if such were the name of the officer commanding his majesty’s loyal regiment of cavalry then at Penford-bourne. When brought to my brother and bade to deliver his message, he informed him that the Lady Eleanor Fleming, the lady of the manor, having notice that the two sons of Lord Masterton were then in the village, leading a regiment of cavalry to reinforce Lord Goring, she prayed them, for kindness and courtesy’s sake, to use her house as their home during the time of their stay, and to command her means in any way which might prove useful to the cause in which they were engaged.

So polite a message required a polite reply; and my brother begged the messenger to inform his lady that, as soon as possible, either his brother or himself would wait upon her to thank her personally for her courteous attention. He pointed out, however, that

some time must necessarily be spent in the quartering his troops, and guarding against all dangers during the night; and he enlarged upon the difficulties of his office so pointedly that I very well divined he intended to put on me the task of complimenting the lady of the house in his name.

Against this, however, I determined resolutely to set my face; not that I shared in the least Frank's constitutional shyness, for at that time of my being, full of youth, and health, and fearlessness, I do not think I should have minded presenting myself to angel or fiend, or should have felt more awed by the one than scared by the other. But as far as my brother's character had hitherto been called forth, I knew it well; and the moment that, as I expected, he began to hint, after the servant's departure, that it would be better for me to go, I burst into a laugh and positively refused. Perceiving clearly that I had anticipated his design, he laughed himself; but persisted in trying by every means to induce me to undertake the task, using the authoritative tone of elder brother—of heir-apparent—and of commanding officer—coaxing and threatening by turns: but all in-vain. I was resolute in my disobedience; and at length, obliged to master his shyness, he set out on foot, insisting at least that I should accompany him, to which I very readily assented.

We were soon in the avenue leading to the house. The long broad gravel walk along which we bent our steps was by this time checkered by the moonbeams, and a single bright star was seen in the clear blue sky following the earth's bright partner, like an attendant. A solitary nightingale, too, pealed its many-melodied voice out of the woods hard by, and every lapse of its sweet song seemed designed to make the notes that followed sound sweeter still, by the dull silence of the momentary pause. It was then the height of the month of June, and there was a languid softness in the air that seemed to unknit the limbs, and even, touching the mind as well as the body, to soften every vigorous resolution of the soul. It was one of those sweet but

enervating evenings when a man feels that he could refuse nothing if asked by beautiful lips and a tuneful voice—nothing on earth! My brother felt it as well as I; but he would not own it, and laughed at the wild nonsense that I talked as we walked along.

“Well, Harry,” said he, on approaching the house, “if the air has such power of love in its soft breath, and if your heart be so very tender, you will here have a fine opportunity of falling in love—an experiment which every young cavalier of course desires to make. The widowed mistress of this mansion, they tell me, is fair; and doubtless forty, according to the old alliteration: and marry! but it would be a suitable match for a mad youth of eighteen! Say, does the spirit move thee that way? as Gabriel Jones would phrase it; or would you rather still preserve your liberty, and gambol through all the mazes of your wild youthfulness like that hare upon the lawn? See how she doubles along the dewy grass, and now sits up in the moonlight, listening to hear what mad mortals are giving a voice to this still grove. ’Tis I, mistress puss, who never yet loved any thing on earth; and my poor brother, whose touchwood heart would be kindled into a flame by the lustre of any young wench’s black eye from the Scottish border to Beachy Head. Now own, Harry Masterton, that a strain of music from yon open window, where you see the light, would complete your ecstasy, and render you perfectly fatuous.”

As he spoke—whether he had caught the first preluding tones or not, I do not know—but as he spoke, the sounds of a lute came floating upon the air; and in a moment after, a fine melodious voice was heard singing, though the words escaped us. Some of the notes too were lost in the distance, or heard so indistinctly that they formed but a low connecting murmur of sweet sounds, joining, as it were, the silence to the song; but still we could catch the rise and fall of the air, and every now and then the clear mellow swell of the singer’s voice poured the tide of music full upon our

ear, and certainly did complete the magic of the season, and the hour, and the scene.

Frank paused to listen; for no man was more susceptible to the influence of music than himself; and I have sometimes been tempted to believe that the internal conviction of being over-susceptible to every thing was the latent cause of the reserve and indifference that he assumed on subjects that I knew to be connected deeply with the most powerful feelings of his heart.

"She sings divinely," said he, after listening a moment. "Come, Harry, let us see this syren:" and, with a bold effort, he walked up to the door of the house, and entered a hall, in which a large party of servants were gathered together. All were instantly on their feet to do us reverence; and our names being given, we were led with a certain degree of ostentation, which might originate in either the lackey or his mistress, through several splendid rooms, in which were a number of fine paintings; but at length the door of a large chamber, filled with a multitude of odoriferous plants, was thrown open, and we saw before us the lady of the mansion.

The lamps in the room were so disposed as to shed a general light over its whole extent, sufficient for every ordinary purpose, but faint and delicate, like the perfume of the plants with which it was mingled. Under its soft influence—though placed at one of the farther windows which the beams of the planet gleamed past, but did not enter—with a lute resting on the floor beside her, and supporting her left hand, which hung languidly by her side—sat a lady, the easy line of whose half-reclining figure, as she gazed forth upon the moon, might have vied with the choicest efforts of art. Yet the attitude was so perfectly natural, so mingled of grace and simplicity, that it was only like that of a lovely child in one of its moments of transient repose. The sound of our steps roused her from her reverie; and rising gracefully, she dropped the head of the lute

against the pile of cushions on which she had been sitting, and advanced a few steps to meet us.

Never, certainly, did I behold a more beautiful creature than she who stood before us at that moment. What she might have been a few years earlier I know not; but I can hardly suppose she was so lovely as she then appeared, though with her the first budding charm of girlhood was gone. She was still, it is true, in the spring of life, and had never known an hour of that withering autumn which strips us of our green freshness; but it was the spring verging into the summer. She had perhaps counted eight-and-twenty years; but it seemed as if those years had been the handmaids to her beauty, and each had added some new grace. Tall, and probably as a girl very slim, she had now acquired a rounded fulness in every limb, which painters, I believe, call contour. There was naught of heaviness about it; all the graceful delicacy and form remained:—the small foot and ankle; the soft, slender wrist, and taper fingers; the waist of scarce a span; while the rest of the figure swelled with an easy line of exquisite symmetry into the full beauty of maturity. Her features were small and regular; cut in the most exact proportion, yet soft; though so clearly defined and exquisitely modelled, that on the straight nose and arching upper lip one might have fancied traces of some sculptor's chisel, before the madness of passion had wished the lovely statue into life. The eyes were deep, deep blue; but the length of the dark eyelashes by which they were shaded made them appear almost black. They were of that kind which seem cold and freezing till lighted by some ardent passion, and then shine forth all fire and soul. Hers however never, that I saw, bore that look of coldness; while her lips seemed formed to express joy; and in an hour I have beheld a hundred different shades of pleased expression hang sporting on their ruby arch—from the soft, almost pensive smile, which took its tone from the pure colour of her eyes, to the gay laugh whose merry music rang gladdening to the very heart.

Her dress exposed more of her figure than I was accustomed to see displayed, and it struck me strangely, as if something had been forgot—but who could regard her dress, when she herself was there ?

With ease and courtesy, she advanced to meet us ; and giving her hand to my brother, bade him welcome. As she did so, she fixed her eyes upon his fine features and broad splendid brow ; and there seemed something that struck her much in his aspect, for her gaze was succeeded by a deep crimson blush, and a momentary embarrassment, which added to that under which he himself laboured.

It passed away, however, in an instant : and turning to me, she welcomed me also to her house, declaring how delighted she was to see us ; how high were her hopes that the cause of royalty might triumph, supported as it now was by all that was noble and gallant in the nation ; and how sincerely she prayed that she might have our society for some days longer.

My brother replied briefly ; but his eyes seemed from the first to have caught fire from hers ; and never did I behold such admiration in his looks before. Something in the presence of that lovely woman appeared to have called forth the energies that slumbered in his bosom ; and while the desire of pleasing prompted the endeavour to please, the degree of timidity which her manner towards him evinced gave him that confidence which was all that his own demeanour ever wanted. All that he said too, during the course of the evening, was as clear, distinct, and well expressed as if it had been composed beforehand ; and while he spoke she seemed to drink in the tones of his voice with an eager attention, which offered a honeyed flattery that no language could have rendered sweeter. What she had expected to meet with I do not know ; whether she had thought to see in Colonel Masterton some swaggering cavalier or raw soldier, full of great oaths and strange excesses, or had pictured to herself one of those mere machines of war which have no more business in a saloon than a cannon—but at all events,

it was evident that she was surprised, and that the nature of her surprise was no way disagreeable. From it she soon recovered, however, and resumed that easy tone of high and finished breeding which was habitual to her. Not that that tone—which generalizes all common minds—had deprived her demeanour of the peculiar and distinctive character which strong feeling or strong intellect preserves under any education.

In her manners there was a softness, an ease, and a kindness which I defy reserve or shyness, however rooted, to have resisted; and her conversation was so varied—at times so gay without being noisy, and at others so feeling without being sad, that whatever was the character of her hearer's mind, whatever was his mood at the moment, he could not help finding something in harmony with his own sensations, something to touch, to interest, or to amuse. She was indeed a syren, as Frank had called her; and though something that I did not well understand guarded my heart against her witchery, I sat by amused, and watched how she removed one shade of reserve after another from my brother's mind, and taught it to shine out, with all its powers heightened and refined by new feelings, which neither he nor I dreamed could so soon take possession of his heart.

She, I doubt not, with woman's intuitive perception, at once saw and knew the deep and powerful passions which that heart concealed; and felt her own capability to rouse them into action. I believe, too, that she proposed at first but to trifle with him as she had trifled with many before; and to win for her vanity, that most grateful of all flattery to woman, the excited love of a strong and vigorous mind. But women often deceive themselves in regard to their own strength, while they calculate on the weakness of others; and striving alone to make a slave, often give themselves a master. Lady Eleanor Fleming had met with many men in the world handsomer, gayer, brighter than Frank Masterton; had brought them to her feet, and laughed their passions to scorn; or coldly pretended

she had not seen their growing love. But she had never met one like my brother. There was a depth, a strength, a sternness in his nature that could not be moved without effect, that must act powerfully whenever it did act; and though she put forth all her charms, and habitually entered upon the game she had taught herself to play, she seemed to feel before long that she had staked upon its issue what she had never for a moment risked before—her own heart.

After we had sat for a short time, wearing away the moments in conversation, that imperceptibly threw down all the barriers of formal reserve which the shortness of our acquaintance had left, she rose, and giving Frank her hand, "You must eat with me, and drink with me, Colonel Masterton," she said, "and then I will suffer you to wear off the weariness of your long march in repose. Your chambers are prepared, and—nay, I will take no refusal," she added, seeing my brother about to decline her proffered hospitality. "Did you think you could enter my house without becoming a prisoner?"

"A captive, I am afraid," replied my brother, in an under-tone. But she proceeded without noticing the little gallantry of the speech.

"No, no, sir! Here are your head-quarters. There is plenty of room in this house for all your immediate followers; and till you go, you are my guest. When the day comes that calls you to the field, I will see you depart, and speed you with my prayers; and should chance bring you back, crowned with victory, to the dwelling of poor Ellen Fleming, I will weep my joy for—for—the triumph of loyalty and honour. And now to supper, gentlemen. I know not why that meal, which seems to close our day of active existence, should be the gayest of all our meetings."

"Perhaps," replied Frank, "because it comes when the cares, and the labours, and the dangers of the day are all over, and nothing remains but enjoyment and repose."

"It may be so," she answered with a sigh; and led

the way into an adjoining chamber, where a table was laid with viands, which I neither particularly noticed at the time, nor shall attempt to recapitulate here. The wines indeed were not to be forgot; for all the most exquisite vintages of the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Garonne were there; and in a state of perfection which I had never before, and perhaps never since have tasted.

Frank drank deep. He was usually moderate to a fault; but now he seemed to seek by every means to raise its spirit from its sleep. He drank deep, but not too deeply. Reason reeled not on her throne; no perception was clouded, no faculty obscured; but, on the contrary, the dull reserve which shadowed him was cast away at once; and his mind shone forth in all its native splendour. The fair syren, at whose side he sat, put forth all her powers; but whether in light wit, or deep feeling, or refined thought, or elegance of language, she found herself outdone by the young soldier she strove to conquer; and at last, driven for recourse to simple beauty as her only means of triumph, she sat and smiled, supreme at least in that, not unwilling to yield the palm in all the rest to one whom she viewed with pleasure, still mingled with surprise. Perhaps, too, the evident admiration with which she was herself regarded—the certainty that her presence, like the light of the sun waking into being the beauties of creation, called forth all the splendour she looked upon, made her pleased with a display of powers which were brought into action by herself.

Surprise was the predominant feeling in my own bosom at all that I saw and heard. I was aware indeed of the deep stores with which my brother had treasured a mind of immense capabilities; but I had never dreamed of seeing those capabilities so speedily turned to account, those treasures so easily brought forth, and so splendidly displayed. I had never indeed seen him fail in any thing to which he bent his energies, but I had never fancied that those energies could be roused even for a moment by a woman's smile,

For a time, I bore my share in the conversation; but as so great and sudden a change came over my brother, I became silent, and sat and listened in no small wonder. Lady Eleanor permitted no pause. She sought not indeed any longer to shine. Either skilfully contented with the advantage she had gained, she struck not one useless blow for a won victory; or giving herself really up to pleasure, she strove to enjoy to the utmost such conversation as she seldom met. She suffered not her part, however, to flag; but with quick and easy brilliancy supplied materials for a thousand brief bright sallies: and, running up and down the diapason of human wit and feeling, seemed to try every tone of my brother's heart and mind, like a skilful performer on some new fine instrument.

I believe Frank had almost forgot that I existed; and for more than an hour he continued a conversation in which, though he shone more than any, the object of his shining was not at all himself, while it must have been still evident to Lady Eleanor, that the spirit of all this brightness emanated from her own eyes. At length his look happened to fall upon me; and whether it was that that circumstance suddenly recalled our former days and his former character—whether he felt ashamed of a gayety at which he had often sneered, or feared that his bosom was of glass, and that I should see the new passions that were working disowned within, I know not; but he suddenly paused, resumed his chilly reserve, and taking leave of our fair hostess for the night, retired to the apartments prepared for us, to confer with the quarter-master, who had been sent for during our supper.

CHAPTER VI.

THE chambers assigned to us were large and lofty, and communicated with each other through two spacious tiring rooms; in one of which sat the quartermaster and a sergeant, ready to receive orders and to make their report. Nothing, however, had occurred to disturb our night's repose. No news had been received of either Goring or Skippon. William Fells had not returned; and the reconnoitring parties which had been sent out to beat the country had met with no enemy, but, on the contrary, had heard reports that the whole force of the royalists had marched towards London. A thousand rumours were of course current through the country; some declaring that a battle had been fought on Blackheath, the parliamentarians defeated, and the king re-established in London; others stating that Fairfax had outmanœuvred Lord Norwich, got in the rear of his army, destroyed the bridges, and cut off his supplies. By one account Hales had been seen proceeding with all speed towards France to negotiate with Cardinal Mazarin; and by another the fleet had entered the Thames, sailed up to London, and threatened to fire upon the city if the monarch were not released. It is not necessary here to inquire how many drops of truth were mingled with all this ocean of falsehoods, but from the very circumstance of nothing being clearly known, except that no troops had been seen for some days within ten miles of the village, we inferred that the enemy were farther from us than we had been at first led to imagine. The country also was stated to be generally loyal; and in many places in the immediate vicinity of Penford-bourne, the peasantry had been found arming in the king's favour.

With these quieting assurances we retired to bed.

I, having lost my valet, was obliged to undress myself in silence, a thing wonderfully disagreeable when one has accustomed one's self to wind up the day by one of those drowsy gossipings which are the best passports to the land of sleep: but as an indemnification, I could hear through the open doors of the tiring-rooms, godly Gabriel Jones holding forth to his master on the perfections of our fair hostess.

"She is, in truth, a goodly and a glorious creature; a cunning and miraculous piece of work; and were it not that her servants declare that she is as pure and undefiled in spirit as she is beautiful in form, she is one of those whom it would befit young gentlemen to avoid, for fear of temptation. Verily, as I saw her but now, crossing the corridor to her bedchamber just opposite, with her two maids lighting her across—verily I was moved, and said to myself, lo! the Queen of Sheba."

Frank listened in silence as he usually did, distilling all he heard through the alembic of his own brain; which, however mingled and compounded might be the mass poured into it by the ear, generally contrived to separate the real spirit from that with which it was adulterated. How long Gabriel was suffered to discourse, and what were the inferences which my brother drew from his holdings-forth, I know not, for I soon paid tribute to the son of Erebus, and heard no more; nor were dreams wanting to my sleep with all their strange vagaries—dreams which sometimes tell the secrets of his own heart to the sleeper, long before his waking eyes would dare to pry into that dark cabinet which the thief-like visions of the night break open at a blow. I know not well what they were on this occasion, but a confused crowd of painful images passed across my mind, the most predominant of which was that Lady Eleanor Fleming had stabbed Emily Langleigh before my eyes; and that my brother held my arms while the assassination was committed. So strong was the impression, that I started up, and before I was well awake, grasped my sword. But all was

darkness round me; and after gazing about for several minutes upon the blank vacancy, endeavouring to call to mind where I was, I again lay down, and slept with less disturbed repose.

The sun was high before I awoke, and starting up, I hastened half-dressed to my brother's chamber, unwilling that either he or I should seem to neglect our military duties in the soft comforts of our new quarters; but the apartment was vacant, both door and window were open; and as I turned to quit the room, Gabriel Jones entered, as if to aid in dressing his master. He seemed—for it was never possible to ascertain whether the look he put on was any thing more than seeming—as much surprised as myself, to find that Frank, who was naturally not very matutinal in his habits, had risen before me.

“It is not yet the sixth hour,” said he, “at which time he charged me to rouse him. But verily his honour does well to watch, with his light burning,” added the knave in the tone of a dull bagpipe. “Does not the apostle say—”

Without waiting for the text, I hastened back to my own chamber, completed my toilet, and, running down stairs as fast as possible, turned my steps towards the village. A complication of shrubberies and winding walks, with high screens of neatly-trimmed laurel and holly, swept away to the right-hand of the avenue; and, fancying that if I could make my way through, I should reach the regiment in half the time which the other road required, I entered the first gravelled path I found, and sped onward like light. I got into such a labyrinth, however, that I was soon obliged to turn back; and in a moment after, as I was seeking my way out, I heard my brother's voice speaking quick and eagerly. I was walking rapidly when the sounds first struck my ear; but from an instinctive feeling that he would wish no listeners to his words but the person to whom they were addressed, I suddenly stopped and looked for some way to extricate myself from the shrubbery.

There appeared no side path, however, and before I

had determined whether to go back or advance, I caught the sweet tones of Lady Eleanor; they were lower than those of my brother, but more distinct, and my pause had given the two time to come nearer, so that before my utmost speed could carry me away, both her answer and a part of my brother's rejoinder had reached my ear. In my haste what was said carried no distinct meaning to my mind. It was one of those impressions the memory of which gradually becomes stronger than the thing itself; and though at first I scarcely marked the import of what passed, I remembered the moment after, the very words which had been used.

"What indeed would not woman sacrifice for a man she loved?" said Lady Eleanor—"but I speak on hearsay," she added in a gayer voice, "for I never yet felt what love is."

"Nor I," replied my brother, "nor I till—"

I turned away, as I have said, as fast as possible; and, as they walked slowly, I was soon out of earshot. For some way I went on with the speed of light, but the sounds which I had heard kept returning upon my memory; I could not doubt the meaning of what had been said, and the tumult of thoughts and feelings which filled my bosom and my brain soon moderated my pace. "What, what was it," I asked myself, "that Frank could dream of in his present conduct? Was he mad? Was he delirious? or was he worse?" But I little knew as yet the effect that love could have upon a mind like his, nor believed that a heart that had hitherto seemed incapable of feeling it, could yield itself blindly up to the wildest impulses of a passion which he had affected to condemn a thousand and a thousand times.

I paused and pondered for long, not feeling myself called upon in his absence to make great speed towards the general quarters. My walk however ended in the village, and I proceeded to make such arrangements as seemed necessary. Nearly an hour elapsed before Frank appeared. He was pale and thoughtful,

somewhat absent and careless in his commands, but at the same time peremptory in his tone, and more reserved than ever.

The officers, who were generally either the sons of our greater farmers, or of the lower gentry in our neighbourhood, did not of course presume to take any notice of their commander's conduct; and I was naturally desirous of seeing every thing proceed as usual, and did all in my power to relieve the evident agitation of mind under which my brother was suffering. At first he seemed somewhat embarrassed by my presence, and once spoke to me in a harsh and imperious tone, which I might have foolishly resented under any other circumstances; but feeling for him more than he knew, I refrained from all opposition, remedied some contradictory orders he had given; and when all the military business of the morning was over, went back with him towards the house, to wait the coming of our messenger from Lord Goring, whose return we expected would take place about midday.

Frank walked slowly on for some way, leaning on my arm in silence, and bending his eyes upon the ground. He was not so much absent as embarrassed; and his mood seemed one of those varying, uncertain tempers of mind in which a man, unable to approve and unwilling to condemn himself, would willingly seek for sympathy were he not afraid of meeting censure, and would gladly find any one to encourage that for which he has himself found no excuse, yet is quite ready to quarrel with any person, rather than quarrel with his own conduct—a mood, in short, which, like some of the sultry days between spring and summer, may pass off in sunshine, in rain, or in thunder, according to a breath of wind. He looked up more than once after we had entered the park; and there seemed a struggle in his bosom whether he should speak or not. But that flowing confidence which is generally a quality of youth was contrary to all his habits, and he remained silent for some time. At length, when we were perhaps within ten paces of the house, he

paused and grasped my arm, saying, in a tone that went to my heart, "Harry! my dear brother, I am not so happy as I have been; and something tells me that you and I have left happiness behind us."

I did not well know what to say, without betraying that I knew more than he communicated; and I am afraid that I answered him with a commonplace—a thing for which he of all men felt the most disgust. "Nonsense, Frank," I replied: "we shall have orders to march before this day's noon; and before to-morrow's you will have forgotten all these sad thoughts."

He looked at me sternly for a moment, and then turning away, as if I could not comprehend any thing he felt, he abruptly entered the house without speaking.

Before I had time to add any thing either to what I had said, we were both in the dining-hall, and no longer alone.

If he had not met from me the kind of sympathy he desired, he received from the mistress of the mansion a sort of silent consolation, which was but too irresistible. What had passed between them while out I know no further than I have stated; but it seemed as if the lady felt that there was something to be compensated. Perhaps she had given him pain—perhaps had done so intentionally; for it is sometimes both sweet and politic to lay up something to atone when atonement is easy. At the same time, as if by a mutual understanding, no notice was taken of their former meeting that day. It remained, as far as they knew, a secret confined to their own bosoms; no very safe link of connexion between two such beings as they were. At all events, she received him to her breakfast-table with a glad yet diffident glance; and while she welcomed me gayly and lightly, she spoke to him with that soft and tender manner which few hearts are well enough fortified to resist. Wit and brilliancy towards him were all laid aside; and the sole fascination she used was gentleness. But it did fascinate, and the more because those who saw it, felt that no other charm was wanting, though all but it were unemployed. There was a lan-

guid paleness, too, over her countenance, which spoke of feelings disturbed, and which that alchymist vanity might turn both to matter for hope and interest, while an occasional quick flush, which rose in her beautiful cheek when her eyes suddenly met his—and which could not be feigned—gave the value of truth to more than what her words and all that her manner implied.

The silence and reserve which had come over my brother once more soon wore away under the influence of those eyes and that voice; and I felt that were I not present, much would be said that many an after-thought could never cancel. But, though the situation was not a pleasant one, and though I would have given worlds to have been where they wished me—far away—for I trust their wishes sent me no farther—yet I determinately held my place; for I sincerely believed that Frank had lost his better judgment for the time, and I hoped that my presence would keep him from further rashness. How far I was justified in that conclusion, and how far the irksome company of a third person may not, like a weight upon an arch, make strong love the stronger, I do not know; but at all events I did my best, at the expense of feeling that I made myself exquisitely disagreeable, to keep my brother from plunging into engagements which in his situation were madness indeed. Before noon I trusted also that commands to march immediately would reach us from Lord Goring; and I hoped that time and absence, and exciting scenes, would eradicate from my brother's mind a passion which I deemed, from its brief existence, could not be very deeply rooted.

God knows I felt not to the full how disinterested were my hopes, for I went not on to calculate all the consequences which must follow either course my brother pursued. I only saw that he was nourishing a passion that would meet my father's strongest opposition, and which, if persisted in, would bring misery and disunion into the bosom of his family. The possibility of my brother resisting my father's expressed will I never dreamed of; nor do I think did he; but I saw

that, any way, Frank was laying up a store of uncom-
fort for himself; and I did not pause to consider what
benefit his conduct might produce to me.

I sat, therefore, and joined in the conversation, affect-
ing not to perceive that aught but common courtesy
influenced my two companions. There was a con-
sciousness, however, in their own bosoms which caused
them perhaps to suspect me of seeing more deeply than
the surface; but the suspicion was evidently but transi-
tory. Lady Eleanor often turned her eyes upon me
with a scrutinizing glance, but I took care to betray no
knowledge; and the conversation, principally carried
on by her and Frank, like a clear sunny stream passing
over the pebbles of its bed, touched lightly upon a thou-
sand topics, mellowed them in its own transparent depth,
and lighted them with the bright rays which poured
through the current of the discourse from the fire in
their own hearts.

Noon approached and passed; and some grand
massive clouds, heavy and detached in the broad ex-
panse of blue, floated over the sun, and gave a coolness
to the air. Frank, tired of my presence, and impatient
under the excitement of his new sensations, proposed
to call our troopers to saddle, and manœuvre the regi-
ment on the village green. "In hopes," he said, "fair
lady, that we may have an inspector-general whose
soft eyes will see but few faults in our poor efforts."

"If there be any faults," replied Lady Eleanor, "I
will try hard to see them, I confess—for I feel afraid,"
she added, in a lower tone, "of being but too blind."

"In sweet charity, be blind still, dear lady," replied
my brother, in the same voice. "I fear, in this world,
opening one's eyes is always a day too soon, especially
to faults," he added aloud, "and therefore I beg that
you will keep your eyes fixed upon my brother Harry's
troop, which he has brought into more perfect discipline
than any of the rest—nay, to say sooth, his fellows go
through their manœuvres with a precision only to be
equalled by the learned cats at a fair. This is one of
our troops of harquebusiers, and, good faith! to see the

worthies prime their pieces, handle their matches, give fire, and file off to let the second, third, fourth, or fifth rank do the same, one would think them the priests of some papistical church, they set to their work so reverently."

A slight flush came over the cheek of our fair hostess, but it passed away in a moment.

"Do not abuse my troop, Frank," replied I; "it is the one will do best service in the field, depend upon it."

"Nay, I do not abuse it," he answered, with that spice of bitterness which he could seldom repress. "I say they are most uncommonly exact; and when they get their carbines to their shoulders, they put me ever in mind of fiddlers in an orchestra—nay, turn not red, Harry—I mean that they keep their time as well. But hie thee to the regiment, my good brother and adjutant; turn them out on the green, and, as soon as this fair lady is prepared, I will escort her down to witness our evolutions."

Such a command could not be disobeyed, though its motive was evident enough. Lady Eleanor even requested Colonel Masterton by no means to stay for her when his presence might be wanted elsewhere—but her tone did not much enforce her words. Strange indeed it is that such things should be! yet—while we all think we are speaking one tongue—there are a hundred different languages brought in to modify our mother English, even in the simplest conversations. There is the language, so often talked of, of the eyes; and there is the language too of the tone, and the language of the gesture, and the language of manner, and the language of emphasis. In short, every one in this world speaks Babel, pure Babel; and very, very often the whole force of a thousand other tongues is employed to contradict the faint, false words that are dropping conventionally from our lips.

Lady Eleanor begged my brother on no account to remain for the purpose of escorting her; but the tone, the manner, the eyes said *stay*; and Frank had sud-

denly become possessed of a fund of courtly politeness, which would on no account suffer him to leave her side.

Our horses had for some time been standing saddled at the door; and mounting with all speed, the commands I had received were soon obeyed, the troopers in their saddles, and the regiment drawn up.

We had still to wait long for the appearance of the lady, whose preparations struck me as somewhat tedious. After a time, however, she appeared, riding a beautiful pawing jennet, accompanied by my brother on horseback, and followed by more than one servant mounted and dismounted. Frank was all life and spirit, and very different was his manner of command that day from that to which his regiment was accustomed. His animation had of course its effect upon the men, and all our evolutions were performed with an ease and brilliancy I had never before witnessed. Lady Eleanor's jennet, well-trained, though spirited, stood quietly through all the noise and bustle of our brief review. At length, after speaking a few words to her for the purpose of ascertaining whether it would also stand fire, Frank gave the word for the two troops of harquebusiers, which in those days formed a part of every regiment of cuirassiers, to blow their matches, and each line to give a parting salvo ere they filed off. The order was promptly obeyed; but at the discharge of the very first troop, Lady Eleanor's jennet took fright, and galloped like the wind over the green towards the park. The rider kept her seat with admirable horsemanship as long as the animal remained upon the level ground; but, wild with fear, and knowing its own pasture, the jennet attempted to leap the low brick wall that separated the grounds from the village, caught the coping with its heels, and fell; throwing the lady, to all appearance, lifeless on the turf. In an instant—before I had time clearly to see what had passed—Frank's horse had cleared the wall at a little distance, and he was by her side. The regiment, and the whole world, I believe, were forgot; and raising her in his

arms, he bore her across the park towards the house, followed by a crowd of servants and of the inferior neighbours, who, on the commencement of the review, had collected within the park wall to see the sight.

The command in chief, of course, fell upon me in my brother's absence; and assuming a degree of his own sternness, to repress some merriment which his eagerness to succour the lady had occasioned, I went through the customary forms, and once more dismissed the troopers to their quarters. When all was concluded, I too hastened up to the house, in truth really anxious for the safety of the lovely woman, who, though undoubtedly the willing cause of my brother's infatuation, was, I believed, unconscious of the evil likely to result from the passion whose seeds she was busily planting in his bosom. I was admitted by the servants to the withdrawing-room, to which she had been conveyed, and found her lying on the pile of cushions beside which we had first beheld her. A maid and my brother were all who were present; but the lady was by this time perfectly recovered; and was answering Frank's repeated inquiries by assurances that she was unhurt, and by a thousand thanks for the assistance he had afforded, and the kindness he had shown. The assistance, indeed, she would insist upon believing to be far greater than Frank would allow—indeed far greater than that which really had been rendered. The horse, she declared, would certainly have trodden upon her as she lay, had not Colonel Masterton come to her assistance; and though my brother pledged his word that the poor jennet, whose fright had caused all the alarm, had gone half over the park before he could possibly arrive, she clung to the idea of his having rescued her from danger, and magnified the debt to justify the greater gratitude.

Although she had escaped without any further injury than such as mere fear might be supposed to occasion, Lady Eleanor continued to recline during the rest of the day; and with her beautiful limbs stretched upon her Moorish couch, with every accessory of

beauty and luxury, a languid softness in her eyes, and an air of negligent exhaustion over her whole form, she looked like a fairer type of that famed Egyptian queen who had made the mighty of the earth her slaves.

Thus hour passed after hour; and Frank remained chained to her feet—chained, ay! no negro slave with golden collar graven with his master's name ever bore the badge of servitude more plainly. No actual summons, it is true, called him from her. We had established a line of sentries up the avenue, and reports were made from the regiment every hour. Our horses stood ready at the gate, and all things were prepared to march at a moment's notice on the return of our messenger. But the very uncertainty of how long the happiness he enjoyed might last made it but the more intoxicating, the more dangerous to my brother; and the hourly expectation of a summons to quit charms which had so captivated him, and to abandon feelings that he had never known before, perhaps made those feelings shoot their roots more deeply and rapidly into his heart than they would have done under any other circumstances.

However that might be—whatever might be the cause of the suddenness of the change which had come over his whole character, and had transformed him from the most reserved, and calm, and cold of God's creatures, to the most ardent, quick, and impassioned—so it was; and I verily do believe he would even then have taken a distaff and have spun, had those lovely lips demanded it.

Nor was the lady herself less touched with the same fire. There was certainly more of manner in her conduct,—she had more command over herself—a power which, while it shaded in her, with a veil of female delicacy, the same flame which blazed forth in his every word and look, gave an air of art and study to her demeanour which at that time almost led me to believe that she was playing a part. But a thousand touches of deep feeling escaped her even then, which after-

knowledge of the world has taught me to judge more rightly; and thence to feel sure that at that period of which I speak she loved deeply, and for the first time. Hers was the passion of one who had long trifled with love without ever feeling it, but who at last was profoundly wounded by the weapon she had used against others; while Frank's was the first, deep, powerful, maddening affection of one who, long immovable, was hurled headlong from his strength at last.

The hours passed on, and no tidings arrived of our messenger. I could not suppose that any evil chance had befallen him; for he was one of those happy people that invariably find some way to get out of a scrape. Being also dressed with puritanic simplicity, totally unknown in the country, and guarded by as much shrewd cunning as ever fell to the share of mortal, he had every chance of reaching Lord Norwich's headquarters unopposed; but still he did not return, and I was uneasy at his absence. There was that sort of vague uncertainty about our situation—that consciousness of a thousand dangers surrounding us, together with that ignorance of the shape they might assume, or the side on which they might attack us, which to my feelings was worse than almost any more positive and ascertained peril. With my mind unoccupied, my passions disengaged, I could not rest satisfied with such a state of things; and seeing that Frank was growing totally careless on the subject, and only regarded each hour's report as interruption to sweeter discourse,—hopeless also of rousing him from his apathy, I proposed to go forth to reconnoitre the country myself.

Frank consented with the best grace in the world, and Lady Eleanor, though she murmured something concerning my indefatigable zeal, did not oppose my going with any of those words that command.

I mounted, therefore, and sallied forth, followed by a sergeant's guard; but though for more than three hours I examined the country between the village and Maidstone; inquired of every peasant and climbed

every eminence; strained my eyes in examining the wide country round, and exhausted all my wit in catechising many an ignorant, obstinate, thick-headed boor; I could obtain no information either of Goring or Skippon, and returned convinced that both were much farther from us than we had first been taught to believe.

As we came nearer to our quarters the old castle on the hill caught my eye, and it immediately struck me that from its commanding situation I should gain a better view of the country, if I could but climb to some of the still standing pinnacles, than could be obtained from any of the neighbouring points. The hill upon which it was placed was very steep and rocky, but clothed with wood from the little stream (or bourn, as they called it) at its base, to the green platform on which the old fortress stood. The space between indeed was varied by many a bold face of cliffy sandstone and many a detached bank unclad by herb or flower; but round the whole, as I have said, swept the remains of some old forest which probably at one time had covered all the neighbouring country. Through this wood appeared one or two paths, winding among the bold masses of rock that broke the rounded green tops of the oak and the beech, apparently terminating at the esplanade above; and by one of these I determined to make my way up to the castle.

Leaving my horse therefore below with the troopers, who sheltered themselves under the shade of the woodside, I began to climb the hill. It was by this time verging towards the evening, but with the sun still high and powerful, so that the ascent was somewhat fatiguing, and I paused more than once to recover breath. One of my halts, however, was disturbed by several stones rolling down upon my head, as if some one were walking along the steep and narrow path above; and looking up I strove to discover who or what it was that preceded me, but I saw no one; and as it might very well be a sheep, a goat, a deer, or even a bird, I proceeded without further notice.

Before I had reached the top I perceived that the

path which I was following wound away by an easy slope to the farther side of the hill ; and at the same time, directly before me—with its gray stones overhanging a mass of rocky cliff not a hundred yards from me, but with a somewhat precipitous ascent between—I saw through the trees the angle of the highest tower, which had still resisted even Time, that great commander, who destroys by his unremitting siege more castles than the sap and mine. The sallyport, for ages so carefully barred and watched, now stood wide open for the entrance of whatever being chance might bring to invade the territories no longer guarded by any thing but solitude and desolation.

The beaten path, as I have before said, took another turn to reach some other part of the building ; but making myself a way over the roots of the trees and the high bank which intervened, I soon reached the postern, which man's foot seemed to have left untrodden for long years ; and climbing the grassy and ruined staircase that wound through the thick wall, I reached the battlement above. Thence I cast my eyes over the whole country which lay beneath my feet, spread out in sunshiny magnificence. The many roads which intersect that rich part of England wandered away from my feet in a thousand directions, like the minute traces which the lizards leave behind upon the fine sand ; and I could perceive here and there a group of country people plodding quietly homeward ; but nothing to cause alarm or to excite suspicion. The evening was not far advanced, but nevertheless the great orb of day had so far declined as to group the trees and woods in broad masses of light and shade, while the grand floating clouds, which would fain have been thunder-storms, cast immense blue shadows over detached portions of the landscape, contrasting splendidly with the laughing daylight, in which the whole of the surrounding scene rejoiced.

My object certainly was more to examine than to admire ; but after having gazed in vain, as far as dis-

covery went, I staid some time to let my eye rest upon a scene, the calm, rich, peaceful extent of which fell upon my heart with a sensation of stillness so deep as almost to be melancholy.

CHAPTER VII.

As I descended the stairs, with a slow and somewhat thoughtful step, I heard a rustling below as of some persons moving through the long grass and brambles, which now tenanted the courtyard; and luckily before I had shown myself the sound of people speaking reached me, and I paused. My progress, so far, had not given the alarm to the speakers. They continued their conversation; and the ruined walls of the tower in which I stood collected every word that was spoken in the court below.

"Now, then," said one voice, "on with thy tale, man—though why thou shouldst fear to speak before Jonah I know not."

"For fear he should not bury what he hears in a whale's belly," replied another.

"Pshaw! He is honestier than thou art," rejoined the first.

"The more reason he should not hear my counsel," said the second. "But let us get up to the top of that tower, and see whether the Amalekitish horsemen have turned."

"Nonsense!" replied the other; "they have gone back to their quarters. Besides, Jonah would give us notice if they were coming here. So on with thy tale, for I am in haste. He has bit at the bait, thou sayest, like a famished trout at a water-fly. What more?"

The first sound of the voices had made me pause; and as they went on, there were many reasons induced

me to await patiently the termination of the conversation which the speakers had begun. It was evident, from what they said, that besides the two men below, there was another watching at no great distance, and from the clink of spurs, as well as from various other jingling sounds, it appeared clear that the speakers were well armed. In the first place, then, I did not choose, out of reach of assistance, to encounter unnecessarily two men whose words at once showed them to be enemies to my party, with a third within call. In the next place, I believed them to be enemies who assumed the character of friends; and in any circumstances, whether as open or concealed foes, I felt myself perfectly justified in making myself master of their plans, in whatever way chance might furnish. I paused, therefore, and listened with all my ears; and never doubting that if they discovered me, immediate and deadly strife must be the consequence, I drew myself back into the dark turn of the stair, just above a spot where one side of the wall was broken away, determined over the gap thus left in the masonry to hurl the first who attempted to come up, should their proposal of climbing the tower be renewed.

"Well, then," continued one of the voices, which I felt positively certain was that of my brother's valet, Gabriel Jones, "I told thee that he bit at the bait like a famished trout; but I did not tell thee that the bait seemed marvellous willing to be swallowed."

"I knew that, without thy telling," replied the other voice, of whose sounds I did not feel near so sure; though I thought I had heard them also before. He spoke in a sharp rough tone, I remarked; and it seemed to me, that though nothing was said which could give offence, there was something in the general subject of the conversation which pained and irritated the person who now spoke, in a degree which scarcely brooked control. "I knew that, without thy telling. Thinkest thou I have known her from her childhood, and watched every turn of her mind till I could divine at a glance why her ribands were of a particular colour, or why

her kerchief was turned aside ; and did not know that she could not sit beside any male thing for ten minutes without striving to make it her slave ? Ay ! and with such power does she strive, that I never yet saw the man that could resist it."

"And thou thinkest that she is never touched herself by this same vanity of love ?" demanded his companion.

"As the diamond that cuts glass is wounded by the glass that it cuts," replied the other, "so has she been ever."

"But so is she not now," replied the voice I took to be that of Jones, with the most determined accent : "for I tell you, Master Avery, that she is now as much in love with him as woman ever was with man. I have lived my day, and not for nothing, having known many women in a godly way ; and, I say, she is more in love with him even than he with her. Ay, and as I know you have set her apart as your share of the spoil, and have heard say that you are as sinfully possessed with her fleshly beauties as the rest, and propose to wed her—"

"I wed her !" cried the other, in a tone of bitter negation—"I wed her !—I would as soon wed a viper that has stung me. I tell thee, man, she has done me wrong ; and I will have my revenge. But wed her !—no, no, no, no, no ! I will wed her rich lands and manors ; but the marriage contract shall be a commission from the council of state, and she shall be named therein a sequestered malignant, giving harbour and countenance to vain and malicious persons, rebellious to the state and houses of parliament. Wed her ! But she can wed no one without an act passes for allowing to all women the consolation of two husbands. But, pshaw ! thou talkest nonsense : she loves him not. She plays with him as she has played with many a thousand others : she feels it not, whatever she makes him think."

"I see the tidings give thee pain to hear," replied his

companion; "and I have heard that thou didst once love her thyself."

"I did! I did!" answered the person he called Avery, in a tone and with a vehemence which showed how much passion overmastered reason; "I did love her—madly—passionately. But I tell thee now, there is not in my bosom a particle of love as small as the grain of dust which escapes the careful housewife's eye. No; there is no love, but some hate; and I would give two fingers of my right hand,—ay! of this right hand, which serves me well when occasion calls for it,—to think that she herself were wounded as thou sayest. Oh, to see her writhe under the passion she had so often mocked! to see her burn with the same mad love! to see her hopelessness! or even more," he added, in a low, deep voice, "to see her infamy!"

"There is a hopeful chance of it all," answered the other, with a sort of commonplace tone of knavery, that discorded strangely with the deep and terrible passions which the voice of his companion had betrayed. "There is a hopeful chance of it all, if things be managed rightly."

"Pshaw!" cried the other; "I tell thee she does not—she cannot love,—it is not a part of her nature: she knows not what it is."

"Mark me then, good Master Avery," replied the first: "Why sits she even now with her hand clasped in his? Why did she lean her head upon his shoulder and weep like an infant within this hour, while telling him something that my ears could not catch, through the chink of the door?"

The other paused for some moments before he replied, as if the tidings that he heard took him by surprise; and I could hear him make two or three strides through the courtyard with a heavy foot.

"Ha!" cried he, as he did so; "ha! then she is caught indeed! Little did I think," he added, pausing, "little did I think when I took care to let her hear of his coming, and to spread the tidings of his beauty and gallantry, in order that she might invite him to her

house, and entangle him in those bonds of amorous coquetry which I well knew she would weave,—little did I think she would outdo my desires, twine the spider threads she has spread for so many round herself as well as him, and be caught in her own net, as well as fulfil my purpose of detaining him at her feet. But mark me! mark me well, Matthew Hutchinson—”

Matthew Hutchinson! I thought; then, after all, it is not Gabriel Jones! Yet I could have sworn to the voice; and as these thoughts passed through my brain, curiosity got the better of prudence, and taking a step forward, I leaned over the side of the broken wall, to gain a view of the speakers. I did not succeed, however; and in the effort I displaced one of the large stones, which—together with a mass of loose cement and some shrubs that had struck their roots therein—rolled away and fell close to where the others must have stood. Possibly they might catch a glimpse of my hand also, as I grasped the corner of the tower; for the moment after came the words, “We are overheard!” followed by a loud, long whistle; and I could hear retreating steps making their way through the brushwood.

Instantly springing from my concealment, and resolved to run all risks for the purpose of discovering who were the speakers, I attempted to follow; but the court was perfectly clear by the time I reached it. I darted from one part of the building to the other with the speed of light, but in vain. I rushed out upon the esplanade, but there was no one there. Not a step could I hear; not a human being could I discover; not a motion could I see among the shrubs, except when I startled a thrush from the leaves, and had to blush for half-drawing my sword upon a bird. All was clear, and calm, and still, with the evening sunshine sleeping quietly upon the gray ruin and the green ivy, as if the step of man had never disturbed the silence of the place since the ruin and ivy had first clung together—quiet, as if no human voice had broken

the hush since those courts and halls had been trod by the busy and the gay of other days. I could hardly believe my senses; and again ran rapidly over every part of the building, which indeed seemed to offer small opportunity of concealment. But the second examination was as unsuccessful as the first; and now, resolving to ascertain in some degree whether Gabriel Jones was really the speaker whose voice I had heard, by seeking him at the manor-house, I ran down the hill like lightning, and springing on my horse, ordered one half of the troopers to spread themselves round the edge of the wood on every side, and keep vigilant watch till they were relieved, stopping every person who came down from the hill above.

In the mean while, accompanied by the other half, I put my horse into a gallop, and never drew a rein till I arrived at the steps of the mansion. I entered without ceremony, and encountering one of Lady Eleanor's tiring-women in the second hall, I asked if she had lately seen Colonel Masterton's valet. She replied at once that she had passed him not long before as he sat reading on the window-seat in the lobby. It was his usual place of saintly meditation, one of those broad window-seats, retiring thither from the unholy merriment of his fellow-servants in the hall. To the spot the woman mentioned, then, I hastened; and undoubtedly there sat Gabriel Jones, with a Bible in his hand, and bearing not the slightest mark of having quitted the house during the day. I fixed my eye keenly upon him; he met it without a change of aspect. I spoke to him; he replied in a calm unruffled tone.

What, then, could be the meaning of what I had heard? I knew that I had no talent for remembering either voices or persons; and therefore I doubted myself. Yet the tone and manner had been so like that of the canting varlet who followed my brother, that I had not for a moment doubted the identity of him and the person I had heard speak, till I found the latter was called Matthew Hutchinson.

I have reported the conversation of the speakers

strictly as I heard it ; but it may be now necessary to say a word or two in regard to the interpretation I put upon it. Without some latent link of connexion between myself and the persons who spoke, their words would have been uninteresting enough, but I had fancied myself absolutely sure that there was such a link, and while that certainty lasted, what they had said appeared of no slight import. Under the first impression, I had believed that the whole conversation referred to my brother and Lady Eleanor Fleming. It was applicable in almost every respect, as long as Gabriel was the undoubted speaker ; but now it might refer as well to some other persons I had never seen ; and entering my own chamber, I stood musing for a moment, in a state of doubt and uncertainty impossible to be expressed. In thinking over the conversation I had overheard, however, I began to remember several circumstances that were apparently at variance with my first idea, that the lady spoken of was Lady Eleanor Fleming. No names, it must be remembered, had been mentioned but those used by the two strangers to each other. One of the speakers had clearly inferred that the woman of whom he spoke was bound by indissoluble ties to some one else. Now Lady Eleanor was a widow, the mistress of her own person and fortune—at least so I had been taught to believe ;—and though I felt sure that her union with my brother would cause eternal discord between my father and Frank, yet in every other respect she was qualified to become his wife. But such did not seem to be at all the situation of the person I had heard mentioned ; and combined with the fact of my finding Gabriel Jones sitting quietly at the manor, this circumstance led me to believe that I had grossly deceived myself : nor could I help acknowledging that I must have done so, even while the sound of the hypocritical villain's voice kept ringing in my ears, and still assuring me that I was right.

The whole business, in short, confused and perplexed me ; at length, after sending to recall the troopers from the hill, and having somewhat rectified the dis-

array of apparel which my expedition had occasioned, I entered the withdrawing-room, in which my brother still sat by Lady Eleanor. I doubt whether he had ever moved, except to reach the book which he held in his hand, and from which he had been reading to her some selected passages from Boccaccio. None of the extracts which that book contained, indeed, could offend the most modest ear ; but through the whole there was a strain of soft voluptuous sweetness, somewhat difficult for a young man to read safely to a lovely woman. Every one, I believe, must have felt that there are some things which, without having aught of positive evil in them, are dangerous from their very sweetness. Some pieces of music, for instance—some pieces of poetry that unnerve the heart and weaken the moral energies of the mind. They are like certain perfumes which, though sweet and balmy beyond all words, relax and overpower all the corporeal faculties. Such was the book out of which Frank was reading. All that was evil had been carefully left out, but there was softness enough remaining to afford passion a bed of flowers.

Lady Eleanor lifted her head, and my brother ceased reading as I entered ; but there seemed to be a new change come over them. All was calm. There was every now and then a glance of deep affection passed between them, which I, who had beheld all that went before, marked and understood. I saw that their mutual hearts had poured themselves forth to each other, and that all had been spoken. But it is probable, that had any other persons come there suddenly, without previous knowledge, they would have seen nothing in the conduct of those two to excite a suspicion of what was passing in their bosoms. There was, it is true, in my brother's aspect, a degree of anxiety mingled with melancholy ; but that might have been accounted for from a thousand other sources ; and though his eye often wandered over vacancy, as if it communed with things we could not see, and his words occasionally fell somewhat wide of the subject, yet the state of the

country, and the responsibility of his command, might easily explain such absence of mind. It was only to my ear a certain softening of the tone when he spoke to her; only to my sight a peculiar glitter of the eye when it rested on her lovely form, that told what was the theme of his thoughts, when his mind seemed wandering afar.

As a matter of course, when first I returned, he asked some questions concerning my expedition; and I, in reply, simply stated the fact that I had made a considerable circuit through the adjacent country, and that I had gained no information of the enemy. I gave no particulars, and he sought none; and all the news that he could furnish forth amounted to the statement that William Fells had not yet returned, accompanied by some expressions of wonder at his absence. Little anger, however, or impatience, mingled with his surprise; he was evidently growing quite contented with his present situation; his mind, concentrating all its energies upon one object, saw and was willing to see no other; and I doubted not that he wished William Fells might remain wherever he was till doomsday, provided he himself might remain where he was, also.

To me Lady Eleanor was all that was kind and attentive; and there was a degree of timid softness in her manner, as if she feared me, and yet would fain have won my regard, which interested me in despite of myself. I felt as if I had injured her by believing that she was the person to whom the unseen speaker had referred; and I was again obliged to acknowledge to myself that I had no just cause to suppose her the original of the very unfavourable portrait they had drawn. That she had acquired a sudden and extraordinary influence over my brother was all that I could lay to her charge; but that she herself shared the passion she inspired, and brought along with her beauty, and talent, and fortune, and rank, at least in equal proportion to the endowments which Frank possessed, I could not doubt. If, therefore, the event of their love was unhappy, she was to be pitied more than blamed; and

I reasoned myself into believing that I had done her gross wrong in attributing to her a character affixed by two persons I did not know, to some one whose name had never been mentioned. My manner and my tone, which I am not sure had been at first so polite as either her station or her hospitality required, gradually softened into more kindly demeanour under these reasonings. In addition to all the powers she naturally possessed of pleasing, she became an object of interest and thought to me. I could not help looking upon her, I knew not well why, as one whose destiny was some way to be linked to me and mine; and at the same time the vague conviction of a thousand dangers and obstacles made me set down in my own mind her portion in our common lot, as one of unhappiness. I beheld her then with the feelings wherewith we always regard any one doomed to suffer. But those sensations were still so undefined as to take no part from the charms of her society; and enchanted (though not to the same degree as Frank) with her grace, her beauty, and her wit, I yielded myself to an evening of enjoyment.

The hours flew rapidly; and at supper, which was announced soon after my return, the conversation became of that varying kind—sometimes brilliantly gay, sometimes grave almost to sadness; sometimes interrupted totally by those breaks of deep thought that words cannot, must not imbody—which is perhaps more powerful in working upon the heart's feelings than the brightest of man's wit alone. Reserve and unkindness, and I am afraid duty too, were forgotten, and all was free kindness and ease. I was the first to put a check upon it, by observing, most ill-advisedly—more as a thought that found unconscious voice than a premeditated remark—"Who would have thought, Lady Eleanor, that at this present moment we have known each other but four-and-twenty hours?"

My own heart was free; and Heaven knows I meant no offence; but even as I spoke the blood mounted up over her neck, and cheeks, and brow, and forehead, to

the very roots of that deep brown hair that fell in hyacinthine masses round her face.

My brother started, and for a moment turned upon me a half-angry glance, as if he thought I meant to break in upon the pleasure of the moment by an implied reproof; but the annoyance which I began myself to feel at my ill-judged remark, and which showed itself by this time in my face, evinced my innocence of all offence; and he answered, "What is the real difference, Harry, between four-and-twenty hours and a life, or even an eternity? Nothing, believe me! Time is but a name. It is what is done in time that is the substance. What are twenty-four centuries to the hard rock, more than twenty-four hours to man, or twenty-four minutes to the ephemera? Ay! even in our own existence there are periods in which space, computed by its true measure of thoughts, feelings, and events, mocks the penury of man's artificial scale, and comprises a lifetime in a day. What matters it to me how often the sun rises and sets? Since his last plunge into the depths of space, I have lived more years than ever I knew before."

Such a declaration I felt would bear no comment in his present state of mind, and I kept silence, praying heartily that our messenger might return before the next morning. Time wore on, however, and he did not come; and late at night we retired once more to our apartments. The doors of our dressing-rooms were open as before. On the previous night I suffered them to remain so, in consideration of the heat; but hearing Gabriel Jones once more begin his homily on the beauty of our hostess, with somewhat of unpleasant minuteness in his comments, I shut the door rather impatiently, feeling that I had no right to overhear my brother's conversation with his servant. What passed, therefore, I know not; but it went on long, now rising into a higher tone for a moment, now dropping into a low murmur. At length I heard Frank exclaim, "Villain! is such thy morality? What meanest thou? What wouldst thou have me do? Speak out, sir! No innuendoes."

The reply was couched in so low a tone that even the whisper of it scarcely reached me; but the moment after, I distinctly heard a blow, followed by the words, "Scoundrel and slave!" spoken in the voice of my brother, excited to a pitch of vehemence I had never known before. "How dare you, for your miserable life, dream of so base a suspicion? Away! get thee gone! Away, I say!"

But the valet still lingered; and I could not but hear his low and droning voice, prolonging the conversation for some time after.

At length the door of the other room was shut, and I endeavoured to recover that disposition to sleep which those sounds had disturbed; but it was in vain. Before I could close my eyes, I heard Frank once more begin to move in his dressing-room, and for more than an hour he continued to pace up and down with a quick and heavy footfall, which evidently betokened the agitation of his mind. Sleep I could not, though I tried all the many ways recommended to the watchful. I counted endless numbers, I kept my eyes fixed wide open upon vacancy, I strove never to let my thoughts rest upon any one subject; but the moment forgetfulness was sinking down upon me—the moment the heavy lid was dropping wearily over my eye, my brother's sharp irregular step roused me with a start to think of all that he was suffering. At length I could bear it no longer. Notwithstanding his coldness and reserve, I loved him deeply and truly. I felt for what I believed—what I knew indeed—he experienced; and aware how much the strongest mind in such moments requires consolation and support, I rose, and throwing on my morning-gown, I opened the door of the dressing-room.

He was still pacing up and down, habited in his night-gear, with his slippers on his feet, and his arms crossed upon his chest. The candles had been suffered to burn untrimmed till they cast a dim and ghastly light over the room, and his own face, haggard with struggling passions, showed a strange, wild expression

in the pale semi-obscurity of the apartment. His ear instantly caught the sound of the opening door, and he turned quick upon me with an expression of impatience and surprise which might at another time have daunted me. But strong in fraternal regard, and resolved not to importune him for his confidence, yet not to be repelled in offering him consolation and assistance, I advanced towards him, and took the hand he neither yielded nor withdrew.

"My dear Frank," I said, "I cannot see you so agitated, so different from what you usually are, without feeling for you; and offering you all that is in my power to offer. I am your younger brother, and perhaps not calculated to give you advice; but at all events I may yield you sympathy, if not assistance. I do not ask your confidence; I see that you suffer; and I divine why you suffer. That is enough, and perhaps more than enough. Let us act as brothers; and at all events allow me to give you comfort if I can do no more."

He heard me to the end as usual—then seemed to struggle for a moment between habitual reserve and awakened kindness; and at length, throwing his arms round me, as he sometimes had done in our boyhood, he exclaimed, "My dear Harry, you are indeed worthy of more confidence than my evil spirit will suffer me to place in any one. That villanous, pandering, hypocritical fanatic!" he continued, bursting out with vehemence at some remembrance that seemed to come suddenly over his mind,—“that villanous, pandering, hypocritical fanatic! The best service you could do me would be to shoot him through the head. He tempts me more than I believed Satan could have tempted."

"Nay!" said I, very well understanding who was the person he meant, though he had given him no name, "to shoot him through the head, though no more than a just reward, would hardly do: but it will be easy to send him back in irons to Masterton House. I; as his officer will do that, and take the whole blame on myself."

"No, no, no!" answered Frank, with melancholy bitterness; "what, to blab of my weakness? to fill our stern father's ears with his son's mad, hopeless, desperate passion? to cant about beauty and comeliness and carnal perfections, and to show forth how he would have stayed me from going down to drink of the pool, but lo! I would not! No, no, Harry; I have missed the move, and the villain must make some mistake in his game before I can give him check. Sending him back would never do—'twould but be giving him a rod to smite me. No, Harry, no! But what would you have me do, Harry? Speak! Not to get rid of him: but to get rid of myself; to conquer the inner devil, which is the worst of the two."

"If you ask me seriously, Frank," I answered, "I would have you tarry in this house no longer than to-morrow morning. Wait but till ten o'clock. Between day-break and that hour there will be full time for William Fells to return, if Lord Goring be within twenty miles. If he arrive not, conclude that some mischance has happened, and march forward. Such is your duty as an officer, and your absence from this place will be the best thing that can befall you in every respect. You will then at all events learn whether you can conquer feelings which, as far as I see, can but bring misery to all."

"But without any intelligence?" said Frank. "Impossible, Harry! Suppose William returns with orders and finds us gone?"

"Leave a sergeant's guard to bring him on with all speed;" replied I. "Let us march towards West Malling or Wrotham, near which the Cavaliers must necessarily be making head, if, as we heard, they are retiring from Dartford."

"I will think of it," replied Frank; "I will think of it. But yet it would seem a fertile way of having our march traced and our progress opposed, to leave an insignificant party in this village with a full knowledge of our route. Yet I will think of it. In some circumstances a choice of evils is all that is left. Fare thee

well, Harry; thank thee for thy kindness, and believe me, dear brother, that Frank is not always as cold as he looks. Even now you have been a comfort to me, and so I will hie me to my bed and sleep."

To have been so was a comfort to me also; and though I doubted his resolution, and would fain have had him yield his promise to follow my advice, I dared not urge him further; but retired to my own chamber, and, palled on the sweet thought of having soothed my brother's agitated mind, I soon tasted as sweet a slumber as ever I remember to have enjoyed.

CHAPTER VIII.

I SLEPT soundly, and I slept long. It was seven o'clock before I awoke, and I found that this morning, as well as that which preceded it, Frank was up and forth before me. Little doubting that his minutes of early diligence would be given to Lady Eleanor, I hastened down to the village; but to my surprise I met him there. He was in the act, however, of sending off a second messenger to Lord Norwich,* with orders to return the next day if at all. I ventured to remonstrate as soon as I could speak with him alone, pointing out that in efforts such as that in which we were engaged, delay was always worse than rashness.

It is extraordinary what a change a few brief hours will sometimes work in human beings. Those whom we left the night before all gay familiarity, and frank, free-hearted kindness, will rise—strange moody puppets that we are!—will rise, after a few hours' sleep, as cold and distant as a stranger. I had quitted Frank with our mutual hearts overflowing with fraternal affection,

* George Lord Goring had before this time become Lord Norwich, and therefore the names are used indifferently; his claim to the title of Norwich never having been admitted by the parliament.

and the iciness of his nature so far thawed, that I thought nothing could ever freeze it towards me again. But now I met him in the morning as chill as ever; and as soon as I spoke he cut me short, abruptly.

"My determination is taken, Harry," he replied.

"Then I hope, Frank," I said, with a foolish degree of heat at finding myself so unexpectedly repelled, "that it has been formed on motives connected with the service of the king."

"That, sir, is my affair," replied he, reddening; "I am here to command, I believe, and you to obey. At least, such I think is the import of the commissions we received at Masterton House."

I offered no reply; and the messenger was despatched. My brother then proceeded to make some quick and sharp inquiries about the regiment, with the brief activity of a man who, feeling that he has been—is—and will be—negligent of some important duty, strives to satisfy his conscience by a few minutes of hasty application. His energy, however, soon died away; and, at the end of half an hour he mounted his horse and rode back to the mansion, without taking any notice that such a being as his brother was upon the face of the earth. I paused for some moments, uncertain whether I would follow him thither, or remain at the village with the regiment. But mastering my indignation, I at length set out, and arrived shortly after himself.

To particularize the events of that day were useless. My brother, feeling that he had not behaved to me with the same kindness I had displayed towards him, was of course more cold and reserved in manner than ever. Knowing himself to be wrong in a great and important point, he would fain have believed me wrong in the minor one of respect towards my commanding officer: for many a man escapes the unpleasant task of blaming himself when he finds something to blame in those that show him his faults.

With Lady Eleanor, however, he was all joy and gladness; and by the despatch of the second messenger

to Lord Goring, he seemed to think that he had won another day from fate. Finding myself *the one too much* to their happiness, and hopeless of effecting any benefit by staying, I proposed and received permission to enlist what men I could from the neighbouring villages. Thus I was absent during the greater part of the morning; and with little difficulty added nearly a hundred men to the numbers of the regiment. There never was such easy recruiting, for a military spirit had been encouraged in the country by both parties, which had spread through all orders; and in every village I found a number of men only requiring a leader. Many had served before, and had been disbanded; and all were strong and powerful fellows, zealous in the royal cause, and ready to shed their best blood for the king's deliverance. The whole country I found decidedly favourable to the monarch; and I could not help regretting that more active and better combined measures were not taken to give effect to the true wishes of the people; but so many reverses had befallen the Cavaliers, that the chiefs in general were either timid from rebuffs, or rash from despair—were either hurrying on before their means were prepared, or delaying till they lost opportunity, that magic door by which man may reach every thing on earth, if he seize the one brief moment that it is open before him. I could not but regret; but when I thought of the conduct of my own brother, I could not wonder at the ill success of the royal cause. And thus indeed it was throughout that long and fatal struggle which destroyed a good king and desolated a happy country. Each man who served or pretended to serve the monarch, in fact and truth served his own passions, his own interests, and his own prejudices first; and then gave the dregs of his obedience to his master. Many loved the king, but the parliament had taught even the Cavaliers that he was not to be obeyed; and the lesson was not the less destructively followed because we affected to abhor it. During the evening I gave my recruits what little drilling could be forced into the time; and endeavoured as far as possible to pro-

vide them with horses and arms ; but, of course, many of them were but raw soldiers, and all of them were scantily accoutred.

My brother came not near the regiment during the whole day ; and all the duties fell upon myself. These I performed as well as I could ; and towards sunset rode back to the mansion-house, hoping that now, at all events, the last day of our abode in that Circean dwelling was closing in. I found both Frank and Lady Eleanor more absorbed in each other than ever. Her eyes when I entered were full of tears ; but they were soon wiped away, and the evening passed as before. I never beheld her look so lovely. It seemed as if all her most potent charms had been reserved to shine out upon that last night of our stay. There was a continual variation of the colour in her cheek, that had in it something strange and striking ; there was a degree of soul and feeling in every movement, in every tone, that gave a new grace to her splendid form, a new sweetness to her soft thrilling voice ; and in her eyes there was a deep powerful light, that seemed to spring from the very heart, and told of the fire within.

At about eleven o'clock we rose to retire to our apartments, and she bade us good night in a manner which seemed to speak that she felt we were going to sleep beneath her roof for the last time. I augured well from it for Frank's resolution the next day, and felt full of hopes that all might be amended which had gone amiss. My brother entered his own chamber, and both the doors between his apartments and mine were closed by his order. His rascally valet remained long with him, and I believe I was asleep before he went. My slumber was light, however, and in the middle of the night I woke up without any apparent cause, and could not close my eyes again. What it was had roused me I do not know. I had dreamed I heard a noise, but when I listened all was silence, and I addressed myself to sleep again. The attempt, however, was in vain, and rising from my bed I approached the open window, through which I could see the beautiful stars shining in the

purple air of a bright summer's night. It was all grand and still and solemn; and the eternal depth of space, lying far and uninterrupted in its transparent darkness, seemed more tangible, yet more vast, than in the day-time, when that profound interminable expanse swarming with stars is veiled from our eyes by a woven canopy of sunbeams, that curtain round the world we dwell in. Having gazed on the sky till I was wearied with its immensity, my eye then fell upon the lawn, and in a moment after I saw a figure emerge from the shadow of the trees, with the arms seemingly folded on the breast, and with a slow and musing step walk forward across the open ground and enter one of the opposite walks. After thinking for some time, endeavouring to divine who it could be, I sat down by the window to mark whether it would return to the house or not.

The wind was westerly, and a minute or two after I thought I heard the distant sound of horses' feet. I listened, and was confirmed in the belief. Through the still silence of all the world I clearly distinguished the galloping of several horses, borne to my ear by the breeze, and alternately low and loud, as the riders passed by the various little woods with which the country round was clothed. At length the sound seemed lost, as the horses ran down into the valley on the other side of the hill which skirted the village to the west. A moment after, however, it rose again much louder, and then, upon the luminous verge of the sky, where the lingering rays of the last long midsummer day still tarried, as if to catch a glance of their successors, I could distinguish the figure of a single horseman. In an instant two more appeared, and then a fourth, as if in pursuit; and on they pushed at full speed towards the village.

Towards the top of that hill was stationed our first picket, and before the heads of the last three horsemen had disappeared as they descended the slope, there came a quick, sharp flash,—another, and another; and a moment or two after, the report of distant firearms.

Hurrying on some clothes, I snatched up my sword, and passed through the dressing-rooms to awaken my brother. I called: he did not answer. I approached his bed; it was vacant; but this—as it had been his custom sometimes, at Masterton House, to rise and walk forth on fine summer nights—did not surprise me, and the mystery of the figure I had seen upon the lawn was explained; though, at the same time, this watchfulness, night after night, showed me painfully the agitated state of his mind.

Without further search, I hastened down stairs, and out into the avenue. The sentry at the door had heard the report, but he had not seen the flash; and bidding him tell the colonel, I hurried on to the village for further information. The whole regiment was now mustering on the green, and in a very good state, for such young soldiers, to repel a night-attack. By the light of candles, lanterns, and lighted matches, however, I beheld in the midst of the whole my own servant, William Fells, bleeding from a wound on his cheek, but to all appearance not seriously injured.

His story was soon told. He had not reached Lord Goring, he said, notwithstanding all his efforts. On setting out, he had proceeded without stopping, till he was within six miles of Maidstone; and affecting to be terrified with a godly horror at falling into the hands of Goring's crew, he had gained from the people of the country full information concerning the royalists, who had halted by this time in force near Wrotham. Accordingly, having quitted the direct road to Maidstone, he turned towards the north; and as his horse was weary, determined not to hurry, although his slow pace might make him a borrower of the night. Before he had proceeded far, he heard the sound of horsemen following; and turning round, saw a considerable party approaching at full speed. As their horses seemed fresh, and his was nearly worn out, he deemed it best to affect unconcern, and let the horsemen pass him if they would.

When they came up, although he was perfectly pre-

pared to be questioned as to his journey, he was very much surprised to find himself suddenly seized, his arms pinioned, and his horse's bridle turned back the way he had come. He did every thing he could, the fellow said, to deceive the enemy. He enacted Gabriel Jones to a hair; he talked about Egyptians and Amalekites, and the land of Canaan, and the oppressors of Israel; and he even ended by singing a psalm.

But all would not do. His captors told him they knew him well, and every thing concerning him; and one of them admonished him sharply not to mock God's saints; and calling him a son of Belial, accompanied his warning with a severe blow from the pommel of his sword.

Into whose hands he had fallen he knew not; but he was carried to a village about ten miles from Penford-bourne, and there he was secured in the upper room of a house, where his soul was tormented night and day with the godly exercises of the devout inhabitants. He was prevented from moving hand or foot by a rope which, first twisted and tied round his wrists, was then bound fast about his ankles, at which point the ends were secured. In the morning following the day of his arrest, he had bread and water given him; but the only information he could gain from the person who brought it was, that he was sure either to be hanged or sent to the colonies. This prospect gave poor William the energy of despair; and with his teeth he absolutely gnawed through the rope that bound him, ere the second day was completely over. He next, with the very same cord, once more united, let himself out of the window into the stable-yard, while all the house were howling their midnight devotions in the lower room. He had still a good way to drop down, he said, and sprained his leg in doing so; but this slight injury did not prevent him from proceeding to the stable, nor from taking the strongest and freshest horse he could find, and setting off with all speed.

The sound of the animal's feet was the first announcement that the fanatics received of the departure

of their prisoner ; but in a moment, three of them were on horseback after him, and the flight became a race. William, however, was as good a judge of horses as ever sat in a saddle ; and having had his choice of the stable, his judgment was put to the fairest test ; but in the present instance it justified him fully, and he still kept before his pursuers. Thus, taking the old castle on the hill for his landmark, which he could dimly see through the twilight of a summer's night, he reached the hill above the village. There, however, those who followed, and who seemed to know our quarters as well as he did himself, threatened loudly to shoot him if he did not stop ; and one of them fired his carbine, which wounded him in the cheek as he turned his head to measure the distance he was off. The shot was returned by the out-lying picket ; and finding that he had escaped past recovery, the fanatics gave up the pursuit and galloped off.

On inquiry I found that he had been asked no questions, the persons who had taken him seeming perfectly as well acquainted with the design of his journey as he was himself, and laughing to scorn his attempts to deceive them, by assuming the cant of their tribe.

He had seen no one that he knew, though he declared that he had plainly distinguished the voice of Walter Dixon, the companion of our march ; and upon him and Gabriel Jones all his suspicions fell concerning the treachery which had evidently been practised. My own doubts certainly jumped with his, but, of course, I refrained from giving any opinion upon the subject till we had further proof ; for why I suspected Walter Dixon I know not ; and yet there was upon my mind a conviction of his treason very nearly as strong as if it had been the matter of direct evidence.

The news of the messenger's return had by this time reached the house, and his story was just finished when my brother arrived. Frank heard William Fells repeat his tale in silence, made no comment, ordered the outposts to be reinforced, the regiment back to quarters, and merely remarking that we must wait till mid-

day for the answer to his last despatches, took his way back to the house.

I followed him instantly, and with the heat of youth and impatience remonstrated vehemently against this new delay. It was clear from the information which William had obtained, that Lord Goring was encamped a little to the west of Maidstone; it was equally clear that no force of any magnitude lay between us and the head-quarters of the Cavaliers. To march forward, then, appeared to me to be our bounden duty, without suffering a moment's delay to snatch from us the golden boon of opportunity. I urged, I remonstrated, I entreated; while he walked on as calmly as if I had been talking of antique Rome. At length I lost patience, I spoke with heat and passion; and gave Frank the advantage of my intemperance.

"Sir," he replied at length, after he had heard me with a degree of irritating silence, which provoked me still more; "sir, you are my brother, and therefore I do not punish you as your insolence deserves; but as your commanding officer, I order you to be silent."

"Well, Frank, well," replied I, "my patience may last till twelve o'clock; but if we do not march at that hour, I may be tempted to do what both you and I may regret."

He made no reply, but entered the house; and I could see by the light which stood in the hall that he was as pale as death. Day was now beginning to break, and hurrying back to the village, I took care that William Fells should get repose and attendance, and then busied myself till the usual hour of breakfast returned, in all the little details which every man may find in plenty to occupy spare minutes. I then went back once more to the mansion-house, where I found my brother alone in the eating-hall, gazing thoughtfully from the window. Shortly after I had entered, a servant announced that Lady Eleanor, finding herself somewhat indisposed, had not yet risen; but begged that her guests would not wait for her, but would excuse her absence from their morning meal.

Frank coloured and then turned pale; and sitting down to table, the breakfast passed in almost total silence. Lady Eleanor appeared as we were about to rise; and it was evident that she had been weeping long and bitterly, though many an after-effort had been used to efface the traces of that sad employment. We were all under considerable embarrassment, and the only question asked was, when Lady Eleanor's sweet voice demanded—hesitating as it struggled with tears—when the march of the regiment was to take place, as she feared by the movements she had heard that it was ordered early.

My brother replied that it certainly would not proceed till after midday. It wanted but a few brief hours to that time; but even the certainty of those short hours seemed a relief to our too captivating entertainer; and as soon as I could do so politely, I left them to themselves, and after wandering some time through the park, went back to the village, and wasted away there the time till noon.

During these moments of meditation, I blamed myself somewhat severely for my conduct to Frank in the morning; and though determined if he still lingered with Lady Eleanor, to take a decided part myself, and join Lord Goring, I at the same time resolved to speak to him coolly and respectfully, and as far as possible conceal my conviction of the weakness which actuated his delay.

I now suffered noon and half an hour more to go by, in hopes of the messenger's return; but at the end of that time I turned my steps back to the house. Its beautiful mistress was sitting beneath one of the large trees on the lawn, playing idly, but gracefully, with some of the green branches that drooped within her reach; while Frank, stretched on the grass at her feet, raised his eyes to hers as they conversed, and seemed drawing life and spirit from those dark orbs alone. Doffing my hat to the lady as I approached, I reported to my brother in as few words as possible that the expected messenger had not come.

"Well, then, we must wait till he does," was all the reply he thought fit to make.

"I am sorry that you think so, Colonel Masterton," I answered, "for you cannot, but be aware that every moment lost in the present state of the king's affairs is perilous in the extreme; that Lord Goring himself enjoined all speed upon our march, and that he is even now probably struggling in vain with a superior enemy, because the reinforcements which ought to arrive—"

"Sir, do you dare to dispute my commands?" cried my brother, starting suddenly upon his feet, with his face glowing like fire. "By heaven, if you presume to show any more of this insubordinate spirit, I will chastise you as I would the lowest trooper in the regiment."

There was a vehemence in his gesture, a fury in his eyes, a loudness in his tone, that seemed scarcely sane. His whole nature appeared changed, and I almost feared his passion would have carried him to the extreme of striking me. It luckily happened, however, that his intemperance was remarked by one to whom he appeared to have transferred that command which he once had possessed over himself.

"Frank! Frank! for God's sake cease," cried Lady Eleanor, forgetting all reserve in her alarm, and laying her hand upon his arm; "if you love me, use not such language towards your brother.—Nay, Colonel Masterton, do I plead in vain?" she added, seeing him about to speak again.

"Not so, dear lady," he replied; "I was but about to give an order to the captain of the third troop.—Captain Masterton," he proceeded sternly, "you will be so good as with all diligence to reconnoitre the country between this place and Wrotham, and particularly between Ditton and Malling. Gain what intelligence you can; and when you have done so, report your return with all speed. Let me not be disobeyed."

My determination was now taken; and further discussion seemed to be perfectly vain. The commands which I had received, it was clear, were given by my brother

only as a means of employing me elsewhere, and of covering the real motives of fresh delay—delay which might bring upon his character, as a gentleman and a soldier, reproaches which no after-conduct would ever wipe out. I could have wept for his weakness, for his infatuation, for his loss of honour; but I felt that I had a superior duty to perform; and I resolved to execute it. I accordingly retired in silence, and ordering out my troop, proceeded directly towards Wrotham, near which place William Fell's had ascertained that Lord Goring was quartered. It was farther, however, than I thought to find it, and about four o'clock, we reached a hill from which we could see a considerable way over the country beyond.

A grove of large trees at about two miles' distance, covered a considerable space of ground upon the direct road, and shut out the village towards which we were wending. Before us, crowning the hill, was a small farm-house with its innumerable sheds and courtyards, its ploughshares lying in summer idleness about the doors, and the patriarchal cock strutting and scratching on the customary dunghill. Notwithstanding the rural dirt, which is in fact no dirt, there was an air of great comfort and neatness, and repose about the place; and, pausing to refresh our horses, I purchased a cask of beer for the men, and sat and contemplated the calm, rich valleys before me, looking as quiet and as peaceful as if they had never been trod by the iron step of war. The good man of the house told me that Lord Goring had held his head-quarters near Wrotham for two days; and it was supposed, would march for Maidstone early the next morning; but he could give me no account of his numbers, although he said that the Cavaliers mustered pretty strong, and neither Fairfax nor Skippon had made any fresh movements against them.

I listened to his words rather idly; and remained sitting calmly on the shafts of one of the carts, letting my eye stray into this valley and that dell, as they lay in a sunshiny mistiness beneath my glance, and fancy.

ing a thousand little quiet, tranquil, sequestered nooks, in the shelter of their bosoms, where the harsh and eager world was only known by hearsay. As I continued to gaze upon the prospect, the sunbeams were suddenly reflected from one particular point, by some bright substance; and gradually a number of brilliant lines were seen proceeding in regular array, along what appeared to be a narrow lane. That they were not cuirasses was evident from the size; and, concluding them to be the pike-heads of some regiment of infantry marching down to join the royal forces, I sat calmly waiting till the horses were rested. Before long I lost sight of the gleam as the pikemen wound onwards; and the prospect resumed its sleepy tranquillity. A minute or two after, however, I heard the report of a cannon, and then another, succeeded by a sharp but desultory discharge of firearms, which left no doubt that an engagement of some kind was taking place beyond the grove of trees which obstructed my sight.

In that direction lay Wrotham and the forces of Lord Norwich; and I could not doubt that, whether the troops I had just seen were friends or enemies, an attack had been made upon his quarters. Such a moment was not to be lost; and with a beating heart, full of eagerness mingled with agitation, I called the troopers to mount, and galloped down as fast as my horse would carry me towards the right-hand side of the grove. I do not think we were five minutes in reaching the turn of the wood, which was encircled by the high wall of some gentleman's park, of which it formed a part. My troop, I cannot but own, was in some disarray by this time from the rapidity of our advance; and I paused for a moment to put the men in order, while the mingled sound of musketry, and human voices, and charging cavalry came loud and close upon the ear; and two or three masterless horses passed us with wild speed.

I then drew out from behind the wall; and in a moment the strange and fearful sight of a field of battle was all before my eyes. The whole for a moment ap-

peared smoke and confusion. Handfuls of horse were scattered disjoined over a wide piece of common ground; and a number of men on foot were evidently flying over the hill. In the mean while the roar of artillery came from a small battery planted on the slope in front of some cottages, whose white faces I could scarcely see for the smoke; and near the same spot appeared a group of horsemen, one of whom had his hand extended towards the centre of the field, where the most serious struggle of the day was going on. At that point a large dark body of pikemen were advancing with a steady unshaken front towards the artillery I have mentioned, notwithstanding the repeated charges of a gallant regiment of cavalry, who twice within my sight hurled themselves upon the pikes, and were driven back with the loss of some of their number, who were instantly trodden under foot by the still advancing infantry.

I saw at once by their brighter dresses and fluttering scarfs that the cavalry in that part of the field belonged to the royal forces; they evidently also made no impression on the parliamentary infantry; and though inexperienced enough in the art of war, I felt that the only chance of breaking that long deep line of pikes would be gained by a charge upon their flank, which our position just commanded. We were about three hundred yards from them. We mustered but ninety-seven men; but the sight of the energetic strife before us, the animating outcry of the fight, and the impatience which had gathered in our bosoms under a long and irritating delay, were all in our favour. At the very moment I saw the royalist cavalry once more rallying for the charge, I too gave the word to my men; and dashing down upon the enemy's flank in a compact mass, shouting loudly, "God and the king!" we were in an instant—almost before I knew it—in the very heart of the parliament's infantry. We had cut our way through, literally like a cannon-shot. The third and fourth ranks of pikemen were all in disorder; the second rank turned upon the enemies whom they found so unexpectedly in their rear; the first gave way before the renewed

charge of the Cavaliers in front; and as the spell of their previous success had been their union and firm order, the moment their ranks were broken they began to fly. Fear, the most infectious of all diseases, spread among them, and they dispersed in every direction long before the chances of the day had really gone against them.

This I beheld after I rose, for one grim fellow had stopped me in career, as I was urging on my horse still farther into their ranks, by burying his pike in my poor charger's poitral. I struck at him as I fell, but could not reach him; and he was just preparing the same fate for me which had befallen poor Sorel, when the front line was broken by the Cavaliers, and he was shot dead by a pistol-ball. Unable to follow the pursuit, I stood and gazed around me, in hopes of seeing some unappropriated horse which might put me again at the head of my men, who had passed on some way before me.

The royalists were now rallying all around, and it appeared to me that I could now distinguish on the field several more regiments than I had seen at first. The group of officers on the hill were also, by this time, advancing along the field; and one of them, a middle-aged hale-looking man, with quick, keen eyes, and a firm determined mouth, rode up to me with the somewhat mixed exclamation of,

"Who the devil are you, sir, that come in here to win a battle you have nothing to do with? Cods fish! the person that made that charge on the flank of the rebels ought scarcely to be unknown to me. Who the devil are you, sir; for I have forgot your phiz?"

"My name is Masterton, sir," I replied; "I came up to the field by accident at a fortunate moment."

"And of that fortunate moment you made a skilful and gallant use," replied the officer, more seriously. "Let me tell you, sir, that they are happy men to whom such accidents happen. But how is it, Colonel Masterton? I expected to see an older man and more soldiers!"

"You mistake me for my brother, sir, I perceive,"

was my reply. "I am but Colonel Masterton's younger brother, to whom, if, as I suspect, you be Lord Norwich, you sent a commission as captain of a troop of horse."

"Oons! man, and where is your brother then?" demanded the general. "Where is his regiment? Why is he not here at the hour of need? But we must speak of all this hereafter. There, mount that horse, my young gallant! Gather your troop together, and follow that road to the right; keep the pikemen who have fled that way from forming again on our flank. But go no farther than the mill," he added, hallooing after me. "Go no farther than the mill, then come back to Wrotham and report yourself."

He then turned to give other orders for the pursuit; and obeying his commands, I followed the road to the right. About a hundred yards from the common I found a considerable body of the enemy already beginning to rally; but they had just been defeated—we had just been victorious; and dashing at once in among them, we again dispersed them over the hedges and through the fields, cutting down a number who were either bold enough to resist or too slow to escape. We saw many, too, of the unhappy wretches flying here and there, several of them desperately wounded, and some of them with scarcely sufficient strength to totter on. My troopers, whose fresh taste of blood had done but little service to their humanity, would fain have terminated the sufferings of those poor fugitives in the most summary manner; but with some trouble I compelled them to refrain; and after pursuing our way to the mill uninterrupted, we returned by the same road, and sought the little village, near which I had seen the artillery of the royal force.

Not knowing where to quarter my men, I drew them up by the side of the mill, and went on foot to seek Lord Goring. A crowd of officers and soldiers near one particular cottage directed me to him, and entering at once the little room in which he was, I found him sitting with two or three other gentlemen—all just as

they left the field—at an oaken table, on which was a large piece of roast meat and a salad. A number of people stood about him receiving orders; and his dinner was continually interrupted by the necessity of laying down his knife to sign various papers, or point out various movements on a map that lay beside him.

Several of these affairs were thus transacted before his eye fell upon me; but when it did so he exclaimed, “Well, Master Harry Masterton, I owe you more thanks than I had time to pay you this morning for your good help in the hour of need; and I now call these gentlemen to witness how high I hold your conduct; for under God—and I am no fanatic to say to Him belongs the first word of thanks,” and he reverently touched his hat,—“but as I was saying, under God, the success of to-day’s skirmish is mainly attributable to you. Remark, the forces I expected not having joined me, I had but fifteen hundred men on the field, and had my position here been forced, I should have lost my communication with Hales and the rest; and probably we might never have been able to have effected our junction. This gives greater importance to this affair than the mere business of the skirmish itself, which, as I said before, was as successful as it has been alone, I believe, through your fortunately coming up on the enemy’s flank, seeing the precise moment when a charge could be effective, and executing gallantly what was judiciously devised. Gentlemen Cavaliers, who have served the king so often, do not think I imply blame to you by my praise of this young soldier. I do not believe there is one of you but would have done the same, had you been placed as he was; and as you were, you acted as well as men could act; and you, sir, think it sufficient honour that I say you have behaved as well as the oldest and best servants of his majesty could have done, had they been placed in your situation.”

It may be easily supposed what I felt at such a public address from the commander-in-chief, and my pleasure would have been unmixed and overflowing, had I not feared that he would every moment ask me in the

same public way the cause of my brother's absence. But something in my manner, I know not what, had shown to his keen eye that all was not quite right in those respects; and with a delicacy of feeling which I could not have expected from his general reputation, his habits, or the circumstances of the moment, he refrained from questioning me further till he could do so in private.

I stood for some time, however, in momentary expectation of having some inquiry put to me, for which, Heaven knows, I had no answer ready; and I contrived in a very few minutes to torture myself with imaginary interrogations and replies, far more painfully than if what is emphatically called *the question* had been really applied to me. Lord Norwich, however, seemed to have forgotten all about my brother, but at length, calling me nearer to him, he demanded what I had done with my troopers; and being informed that I had left them drawn up without till I had waited upon him, he directed me to speak with the quarter-master of his own regiment concerning the disposal of them for the night. He then added, in a low tone, "Return in an hour, young gentleman; you will then find me alone, and I would have some more conversation with you."

Glad to escape, I proceeded to find out the officer to whom he referred me; and having made all the necessary arrangements, inspected the troop, and ascertained the amount of our loss in killed and wounded, which was comparatively small, I superintended the bringing in of two of our wounded companions who had remained upon the field, and then turned towards the village again.

I had mingled in the fray; I had aided in the bloodshed; with all my small power, I had edged the sword of the destroying angel; and during the whole, I had felt very little after the first moment, but the eagerness with which a boy pursues a butterfly or a bird; yet as I again passed over the field, and had in one place to pick my way between five or six naked corpses,

which some fiends of women had already stripped and left glaring with their gashes in the evening sunset, I own a chill feeling of horror came over me, and I could not but comment sadly on the bloody work in which I had been so ardently engaged.

Was it glory, I asked myself, to make such things as that? Was he the most honourable who could devise the quickest means of changing the godlike human form, with all the mighty beauty of life and energy, to the cold, meaningless, leaden things that lay cumbering the bloody earth over which they had lately moved in hope and expectation? But, alas! glory and honour, and all the wishes, desires, and pleasures which man dignifies with fine or tuneful names, will but few of them bear the microscope.

CHAPTER IX.

THE hour was just expired when I again turned to Lord Goring's quarters, which in fact consisted of a mere cottage. He was not yet alone, but his present occupation seemed only the discussion of a bottle of strong waters, with a gentleman who sat near him; and who, the moment after, rose and left the chamber, while the general with his own hand restored the spirits to a nook in a corner cupboard, from which the bottle had been withdrawn.

"Sit, young gentleman," he said, as soon as we were alone; "sit, and let me hear why, instead of sending a single troop, your brother did not bring down the whole regiment he had commission to raise. I would not speak with you publicly on a matter where I may have to speak harshly."

"My brother, my lord," I replied, "waited your lordship's orders. Two messengers have been sent you from Penford-bourne."

"None have reached me, sir," he answered, hastily; "none have reached me. Orders!—oons! sir, had he not orders to join me with all speed?"

"Till this morning, my lord," I said in reply, "he did not know the position of your lordship's forces."

"Then why did he not come when he did know it?" demanded Lord Norwich, vehemently. "Sir, there is something more in this! I have heard of a regiment being quartered for three days or more at Penford-bourne, while the commanding officer revelled at the house of a certain fair widow—or wife—or something—ha, sir! Is your brother a coward?"

"My family, in general, does not produce such things," I replied, reddening; and he instantly added,

"No, no, I do not suppose it does. But what am I to think, young gentleman? Here, your brother with orders to make all speed and join me without delay, halts for three days within fifteen or sixteen miles of my head-quarters, leaves me to be attacked—ay, and nearly defeated, by the rebels, and sends me but the succour of a hundred men. Sir, the very fact of his sending you was either an insult to himself or to me. If you could come, he could come."

"Nay, sir," I answered, "my brother did not contemplate my joining you. He sent me out to reconnoitre, and hearing the firing, I came down to be of what poor service I could."

"What, then, I have not to thank him even for your presence?" cried the general. "'Tis well! 'tis mighty well! Reconnoitre, sir! In three days' time he should have been as fully acquainted with the whole country round him, as I am with the surface of that table. Reconnoitre! Did he always send out a whole troop to reconnoitre for three days, before he moved the regiment fifteen miles? Sir, what is the meaning of all this? I charge you on your honour, tell me why your brother has delayed his march?"

"I can but state his motives, my lord, as they were stated to me," I answered.

"Pshaw!" he cried, interrupting me; "Is your brother tampering with the rebels? Is he waiting to see which party will be victorious? Is he afraid or disaffected, stupid or idle? In any case, sir, he is unworthy and unfit to hold the command he does; and by virtue of the authority reposed in my hands by his majesty, I am determined to supersede him."

"Nay, my lord, nay," I exclaimed, seeing the imputation likely to fall upon Frank, worse than even the truth could have made it. "For God's sake, do not on the same day you honour me by your thanks for a good service, do a thing that must blast the character of my brother for ever."

"Each line of conduct, sir, must have its reward," replied Lord Norwich, sternly. "You have acted well, with skill, coolness, and courage, such as we seldom see in a man's first field; and I have thanked, and would reward you, were there any means of doing so. But your brother has neglected his duty, if not betrayed his trust, and he too must have his reward."

"Then, my lord," I interposed, somewhat too boldly perhaps, "let both our rewards be in words. You thank me, and I am more than sufficiently paid. Reprimand my brother if you please, and he will be more than sufficiently punished."

"More than sufficiently, sir!" exclaimed Lord Norwich, striding up and down the room; "I tell you, sir, that in times like these, when activity and zeal are every thing, if I were to have your brother out, and shoot him on the green, he would not be *more than sufficiently* punished."

"Indeed, my lord," I ventured to reply, "Frank is more to be pitied than blamed in the present case. He has been, I believe, deceived by false information, and certainly is entangled in a way that he finds it difficult to break through—"

"Where, sir? How?" demanded the general, whose whole mind was full of military matters alone. "How is he entangled? Show me what enemy opposes his

march. Sir, there is not a corps between him and me, as you yourself well know. What enemy entangles him, sir? say!"

"No enemy, my lord, but pretended friends," I replied, "who, working on his mind by means of his affections, do not give his judgment fair play. Indeed, my lord, I would answer for it, that if he could but be got away from the place where he is now, he would prove one of the best officers under your command."

The moment I had spoken, I regretted what I had said, fearful that my words might draw on inquiries which I could neither answer with honour, nor refuse to answer without suspicion; but, as very frequently happens, my reply, in its very incautiousness, produced a better effect than more studied sentences might perhaps have done.

"Ay! ay!" exclaimed the general, with a grim smile, as if a new light had suddenly broken in upon him. "Ay! ay! I understand you now. A woman is it? Damn them all! they have ruined more soldiers than enough. Women and wine, sir! women and wine! they have done more to defeat King Charles's armies than all the Fairfaxes, or Skippons, or Cromwells that ever were born. Women and wine, sir! women and wine!" and at those ominous words, he shook his head with a melancholy frown.

I would willingly have explained to Lord Norwich that the feelings which detained my brother from his duty, though equally blameable in their effects, were not of the coarse nature which he seemed to suppose; but, without giving a moment's attention, he cut sharp across me, returning, as was his custom apparently, to his own particular train of ideas.

"Nevertheless," continued he, "the king's service, sir, must not be neglected for any such toys; and the breach of duty in your brother is not the less culpable, whatever may be its cause. However, sir, a sort of fellow-feeling for your brother's situation makes me give him one chance, as well as the pleasure of show-

ing how much I esteem your conduct this day. My intention is, sir, to supersede your brother, and name you to the command."

I started at this sudden announcement, and was about to remonstrate, but he stopped me, exclaiming, in a sharp voice, "Do not interrupt me, sir, I have let you talk too much already. You shall put your new commission in your pocket; and as you seem to think Colonel Masterton may behave better if removed from his present quarters, you shall use every means of persuasion you think fit to make him march the regiment instantly. If he comply, you may burn the supersedure; but if he neglect or refuse, you have my orders to take the command instantly, and lead your troopers to meet me at Maidstone. Let me see! Hales joins to-morrow morning at four: we march at nine. As you have a long route before you, I give you till the day after to-morrow at eight in the morning, to be at the little green in front of the Bush alehouse out of Maidstone gates. There halt and wait for orders. If you do not receive them in an hour, gain what information you can, and make all speed to join me wherever I may be. But mark me! Do not let your fellows drink, for we shall have sharp work before that day be over, I doubt. Fairfax is pursuing me with all speed; but with your regiment and the other reinforcements, I doubt not we may stand against him by that time. Now, sir, good night! Be ready to set out at four to-morrow morning, before which hour you shall have the papers I mentioned."

His tone implied that no reply must be made; and I accordingly bowed and left the room in silence. At the door of the cottage I met a crowd of young Cavaliers, by whom I was instantly surrounded, and with many a greeting and welcome, and various expressions of thanks for my assistance that day, I was dragged away, not unwillingly, to supper. Since an early hour of the morning I had tasted nothing, and therefore did ample justice to the viands set before me; but I soon found that many a midnight bowl was likely to follow

the more solid affair of eating, and my whole object became to escape from the carousal that was about to commence. We were twenty persons, in a little low-roofed room, whose dingy rafters bespoke centuries of smoke and uncleanness; and the smell of various liquors, from rum to aqua vitæ, as well as the roar of various voices shouting toasts, singing songs, and swearing oaths, was perfectly overpowering.

After drinking several toasts, among which I only remember "Hellfire for Fairfax, and damnation to Oliver's nose," I was allowed to make my exit, on the plea of having ridden far before the skirmish, as well as fought hard in it; and finding my way to the barn in which my men were quartered, I lay down in the loft and fell sound asleep. The next morning, by the gray of the dawn, Sir George Warrel's trumpets, as he brought up his large reinforcements, wakened me from my slumber; and in a few minutes my troop were on horseback and ready to set out. About a quarter of an hour after, an officer delivered to me a sealed packet from Lord Goring, addressed, "To the hands of the Honourable Master Harry Masterton," and containing in writing the directions which had been given me the night before, signed by the earl. The moment I received it I put the troop in motion, and once more returned towards Penford-bourne.

The situation in which I was placed was as painful as can be well conceived, although it gave me the only chance of forcing Frank to do his duty and redeem his honour, by breaking through the snares with which he was enthralled, and by now acting vigorously in the service of the king. The method, however, in which I was to proceed was the question. I knew my own impatience of disposition on the one hand, and his inclination to arbitrary measures on the other, too well to doubt that the very fact of my having joined Lord Goring and been absent the whole day would be a cause of quarrel between us, which might heat and irritate us both, before we came to the more important consideration of hurrying our march to Maidstone.

Nevertheless, I felt pretty sure that, bearing to Frank the express commands of the general-in-chief, I should be able to prevail on him to obey them; and I resolved to master my own temper as far as possible in the discussion, that he might find no excuse for neglecting the orders in the conduct of the person who bore them. At the same time, I determined to act as warily towards him as the circumstances permitted; and while I gave him Lord Norwich's commands to proceed to Maidstone, not to name even his supersedure but on the last necessity.

While these thoughts were passing through my brain, and working themselves into resolutions, a horseman suddenly crossed the road along which we were travelling. As soon as he saw us he drew in his bridle, and paused for a moment to look at the troop as it approached. He seemed to hesitate whether he should go on or turn; but the moment after, he rode up to me, saying, "I give you good morrow, Captain Masterton," and I recognised the companion of our march to Penford-bourne, Walter Dixon.

My resolution was instantly taken, though perhaps it was a somewhat rash one; and I replied, "Good morrow, Master Dixon; you are doubtless coming to join us at Penford-bourne. We will ride thither together. I am just returning from Wrotham."

"I will go part of the way," replied he; "but I cannot go the whole, for I have business at Ashford before I join you finally. What news from Wrotham? How does ~~God~~ get on? He makes a stand, I find."

"Nay, nay, you must ride on with me," I rejoined. "My brother will be so glad to see you;" and as I spoke, I made a sign, as privately as possible, for those who were behind to ride up.

"I cannot, indeed," he replied. "Business of a particular kind will compel me to leave you about a mile hence; but I will ride so far with you, and you shall tell me the news."

"Your riding must not stop there, Master Walter Dixon," I replied, spurring forward my horse, and

catching him by the collar; "you must with me to Penford-bourne, whatever business you have at Ashford."

"How now, sir!" he exclaimed, attempting to draw his sword. "Who dares lay hands upon me?" But by this time the two headmost men of the file were upon him, and resistance was in vain.

"What mad suspicion has crossed your brain now, sir?" he demanded angrily. "Methought you had laid aside all those wild caprices at Amesbury. Do you jest, sir? or are you serious? Pray of what am I accused now?"

"I am perfectly serious, Master Dixon," I replied; "and as to what you are accused of, you shall hear a part in that meadow, where I intend to halt for half an hour. Look well to your prisoner, corporal; and rather shoot him than let him escape."

So saying, I rode on, and halted the troop for a little rest in one of the fine green fields that skirt along the windings of the Stoure. There I called William Fells to my side, and, while the prisoner was kept at a distance, bade him endeavour to remember any thing he had overheard Walter Dixon say while he had been in the hands of the fanatics. What he had heard, he replied, consisted alone of detached sentences; but of these he repeated to me several; and having ordered the prisoner to be brought before me, I said to him,

"Master Walter Dixon, my servant William Fells—whom you now see, not for the first time—declares that he has overheard from your lips a base plot for betraying the trust my brother placed in you, and for detaining him at Penford-bourne till his own honour and the opportunity of serving the king were lost together. This may be all a mistake, but you will be good enough just to pronounce a few sentences in his presence, that he may judge better of the voice. Will you have the kindness to repeat after me these words;" and fixing my eyes intently upon his countenance, I added one of the scraps with which William had furnished me. It was to the following effect: "So, he replied that they were at their wits' end, for they could not detach a suf-

ficient force to keep him in check, while they threw forward three regiments upon Wrotham; and I told him in reply, that if they would give me the lands, I would undertake to keep him three days longer where he was. But he said that he could not undertake it—that the council must judge: and then I said I would do nothing more, for notwithstanding all I had done—prevented him from joining Goring, and given them the opportunity of cutting his regiment to pieces—the council neither seconded the design, nor seemed inclined to grant me the lands.”

William Fells's excellent memory had enabled him to retain this disjointed speech very perfectly; and when he repeated it to me, he persisted in declaring that Walter Dixon, and none other, had spoken it. To my surprise, however, my prisoner went over it without a change of countenance that I could discover, although I kept my eyes upon him, both with the intention of catching any effect it might produce, and of increasing his confusion if he were really guilty. He made me reiterate various parts more than once, as if he did not remember the whole; and when he had done, he calmly demanded if it was alone from some fancied resemblance, reported by a servant, between his voice and that of another person, whom the servant even had never seen, that I thought fit to stop a gentleman on the highway, and accuse a person who on one occasion had guided me clear of an enemy that would have destroyed both me and mine but for his interference?

He spoke with something between sneer and reproach in his tone; and certainly there never was a more artful piece of acting than that which he displayed upon the occasion; but, remembering what I had heard myself at the hill, I replied that it was not on such circumstances alone that I accused him; for that plenty of other proof existed against him, as he would find hereafter. Resolving to try him a little further, I then ordered the troop to horse, pretending to be surprised at the lateness of the hour; and observing aloud

to William Fells, that if we did not make haste we should not arrive before the execution of Gabriel Jones. This I said with my back towards the prisoner; but turning sharply round the moment it had passed my lips, I saw him become first deadly pale, and then as crimson as my sword-knot. So far my suspicions were confirmed; and I resolved, even if I could prove nothing against Master Walter Dixon, to keep him, at all risks, so securely that he could betray us no further than he had done.

The troop now marched forward; and without accident or interruption we arrived at Penford-bourne. My brother was not with the regiment, and the news that he had not set his foot in the village that day, evidently showed that his infatuation and indifference had increased, rather than diminished, during our absence.

Leaving Walter Dixon well guarded, and with strict orders to the sentries to allow no one speech of him, I proceeded to the mansion-house; but there also I was disappointed in my search. Frank had ridden out with Lady Eleanor; and I dismounted to wait his return: but, finding that I was only irritating myself as I sat alone, with the expectation of what was to ensue, and was getting up in my own imagination a variety of angry observations for my brother and replies for myself, which only prepared my mind to be irascible and petulant, I very soon mounted a fresh horse, and rode out to seek the party. I met the whole cortège not a hundred yards from the park gates: Frank evidently in high spirits, and the lady all that was gay and lovely. I could not but perceive that my coming overshadowed the brightness of the morning to them both. Lady Eleanor drew a deep sigh, but welcomed me courteously. My brother's brow gathered into a frown; and remarking upon my absence from quarters the night before, he trusted, he said, that I had some good cause to assign for not returning.

I replied that I had; and would communicate it to him at leisure; and turning my horse's head, I accompanied the cavalcade in its return.

Scarcely had we entered the gates, and turned into one of the long deep avenues which was skirted on the right-hand by a mass of broken copsewood, when a man, evidently a gentleman, habited in black, crossed the avenue; and without taking any notice apparently of our party, entered the copse. Lady Eleanor drew in her horse with such a sudden recoil as almost to throw him on his haunches.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Frank, who had not seen the figure. "You are ill, Ellen. How deadly pale you look. For heaven's sake, what is the matter?"

"Nothing! nothing!" replied she hastily; and seeing me about to enter the copse after the intruder, she added, "Do not! do not for God's sake. I know who it is."

"Who what is?" demanded my brother. "I saw no one but ourselves."

"Oh, it was but the forester," she replied. "But he came across me so suddenly, he made me start. Let us proceed, gentlemen."

We accordingly moved on, Frank satisfied that it was the forester who had caused the lady's sudden start; and I equally convinced that it was not. Lady Eleanor, however, did not recover her composure completely; and though she spoke of various subjects as we rode forward, strove for cheerfulness, and even for mirth,—her conversation was broken, her answers wandered from the point, and her gayety was evidently the effort of a heart ill at rest, to cover the cause of its disturbance. As we approached the house, she complained of fatigue; and on dismounting, retired to her own apartment.

CHAPTER X.

FRANK, with a step of slow deliberation, proceeded to the apartment in which Lady Eleanor usually sat. What was in his thoughts I know not—whether he felt that he could scarcely blame me for a breach of duty, when he himself was neglecting his own; or whether his whole mind was occupied with her who had just left us, and the idea of his military command came across him but as a brief and troublesome memory to be banished as soon as possible, I cannot tell. However, he sauntered into the room with deep thought written in his eyes, but with listless indifference in his walk and manner. He said nothing concerning my prolonged absence; but, advancing towards the windows, took up a book which Lady Eleanor had been reading, laid it down again, after a brief and casual glance; raised her lute from the cushions on which it rested, ran his hand over the strings, drawing forth some discordant notes, and then replaced it where he found it; and at length turning to the window, he gazed out for a moment or two in silence. I was silent also, and stood watching his movements with mingled feelings of pain and impatience. In a few minutes he turned; and, as if he felt it absolutely necessary to say something, he asked, "Well, Harry! have you reconnoitred the country between this and Wrotham?" speaking in a very different tone from that which he had used in the first irritation of my importunate return.

"I have, Frank," I replied, "and have to inform you on that head, that there is not the slightest appearance of any enemy from this place to the head-quarters of Lord Norwich." At the latter words of my reply he started, and turning very red, demanded,

"Then did you visit Lord Goring's quarters? Did

you see Lord Goring, sir? How came you to disobey your orders? I bade you reconnoitre the country, not proceed to the army!"

"To reconnoitre the country between this and Wrotham were the commands I received," was my reply: "in doing so, I found Lord Goring attacked in position by the forces of the rebels, and of course yielded him that aid and assistance which as a servant of his majesty I was bound to do."

"You have disobeyed my orders, sir!" cried he, drawing nearer to me, with a countenance in which anger and agitation and shame were strangely mingled,—“you have disobeyed my orders! What did Lord Goring say? What part had you in the action? When did it take place? What questions did he ask? How was your troop—?”

How many more interrogatories he would have addressed to me I do not know, had not a servant entered and presented a billet, which he said had been left for Colonel Masterton by a stranger, who staid not a moment at the door. At first, Frank scarcely noticed either the servant or the note that had been given him; but the lackey, seeing that in his agitation he was twisting the paper to pieces, ventured to turn back and tell him further, that the stranger had been very particular in directing that it should be delivered immediately, and *with care*. My brother then opened it, and ran his eye over the contents,—he paused,—read it again more attentively, muttering to himself, “Well! mighty well! If that may settle it! So!—Now, sir,” he continued, turning once more towards me with a cooler but a still sterner air, “Now, sir, what said Lord Norwich?”

“He blamed highly our delay at this place,” replied I: “he said it was unnecessary, inexcusable, and wrong in every sense of the word.”

“That he and I will settle when we meet,” interrupted Frank; “doubtless, according to your showing, sir, my conduct might be wrong and inexcusable.”

“You do not do me justice, Frank,” I answered;

counsels which would have freed him from the mental thralldom that bound him down.

"I fear I interrupt you, gentlemen," said Lady Eleanor, pausing in her advance; "I fear I break in upon some matter of deep import;" and her eye glanced from the now animated countenance of my brother to mine, striving to read whether the feelings that sparkled in each were amicable or angry. I was silent; for I felt that she not only interrupted my discourse, but all my best designs.

Frank, however, replied with a smile, "Not in the least, dearest lady! not in the least!" and as he spoke he took her hand, and led her to her seat near the window, adding, "Our conversation will soon be over on important subjects. Harry, I can and will join Lord Norwich to-morrow, but it cannot be by eight o'clock."

"Then you may as well not join him at all, Frank," I answered, somewhat impatiently, as I saw new delays blighting all that I had accomplished. "Lord Goring's orders are, that the regiment be at Maidstone by eight at latest, and they must be obeyed."

Lady Eleanor passed her hand twice across her eyes; and Frank replied, resuming at once the cold, stern tone he had been accustomed to use,

"That, sir, is my business. The regiment cannot be there by eight; no, nor by nine."

I was now convinced that all would again be lost without some great effort to change his determination; and I made one, which nothing but the painful circumstances in which I was placed could justify—which nothing else could have induced me to attempt. Not that that measure was one of thought and calculation. On the contrary, it was one of impulse, the last resource of my mind in despair of seeing a brother act as his duty, his honour, and his name required.

"Lady Eleanor Fleming," I said, advancing to the spot where that lady sat, with the tears clustered in her beautiful eyes, and scarcely withheld from running over, even by all woman's habitual command of her own feelings,—“Lady Eleanor Fleming, mine is a hard task. I

“speak to my brother, who is as dear to me as ever brother was to brother;—I speak to him as advocate for his own honour, for his own duty.—Do not interrupt me, Frank, for pity’s sake; for, indeed, I would interest a more persuasive voice than mine to plead the same cause.—Lady, I bear him the direct orders of his commander-in-chief to march his regiment a short and easy distance by a particular hour, in order to share in movements and efforts on which the safety of the king and the realm depend, as the last stake which can be played for the crown of this country. Speak, lady, if, as I believe, you hold him dear; and urge him to the straightforward duty that lies before him. Speak, for the love of Heaven; for he is ruining himself, and casting away his honour as a soldier!”

No language can express the bright but beautiful colour that overspread her face at an appeal which touched, perhaps too boldly, on feelings that I was supposed not to know; but it was my last hope of influencing my brother by gentle means; and, as far as engaging her voice also, I was successful—unexpectedly successful.

“Colonel Masterton,” she said, with her cheeks still glowing, “I know not, I cannot imagine that my voice should have such power as your brother supposes; but yet, as he has spoken boldly, I will not dissemble; and, as your interest and your honour *are* dear to me—most dear,—for both their sakes I advise, I pray you to obey the orders you have received.”

While she spoke she fixed her eyes full upon him; and her words flowed with rapid and energetic eloquence, while her cheeks, her neck, her brow were all crimson with feeling and with consciousness; but the moment she ceased, she dropped her eyes to the ground—resumed her seat—the colour faded in her cheek—and instead of the eager fire that had but a moment before sparkled in her glance, the tears burst forth and overflowed the long dark curtain of her eyes.

“Dear lady,” replied Frank, in a soft but determined tone, “it must not, and it cannot be. I will be responsible

to Lord Norwich for my own conduct. As for you, sir," he added, turning sternly towards me, "you have taken this day an unwarrantable liberty with me and with this lady; and though, like many other offences, I resent it not, because I am your brother; as your commanding officer, I will not have my commands disputed, or my will cavilled at. Go, sir, to the regiment. See that all be prepared to march at nine to-morrow. Answer me not, sir! for I am, at least, colonel of the regiment, and will be obeyed."

"The liberty I took with that lady, Frank," I replied, "was solely, through her persuasion—I may say, her noble and generous counsel, to save you from a far greater pain that you must now suffer. You are not, as you suppose, colonel of this regiment; and, whether you will or not, it marches for Maidstone to-morrow, at five in the morning."

"How now, sir? You are mad!" exclaimed he, advancing towards me, with his eyes flashing as if they were full of lightnings. "You are surely become insane! and have lost what little wit you ever possessed!—Or is this mere insubordinate insolence?" he added. "We will soon see whether I am, or am not, colonel of the regiment.—Ho! without there," he called from the open window to the sentinel on the steps; "order up a sergeant's guard with all speed. By Heaven, I will bear with it no longer!"

"You had better calm yourself, Frank Masterton," I replied; "the guard must be turned to other purposes than that for which you called it.—Yet, one word more, Frank: will you march to-morrow at five?"

"I will not!" he answered, striking his clenched hand upon the table.

"Well then, sir," rejoined I, "from George Lord Goring, Earl of Norwich, you received your commission, and from George Lord Goring I bear you your supersedure; and if you follow my advice, you will make the best of your way back to Devonshire; for if you fall into the hands of the Roundheads, they will probably shoot you for active loyalty you have too little

displayed ; while if you fall into those of Lord Goring, even a brother's intercession I do not think would save you from death, for treachery that you did not intend to practise."

Frank had turned deadly pale while he gazed upon the copy of his supersedure which I handed to him ; and I could see the struggle for firmness which was long going on unsuccessfully in his bosom. At length, however, he mastered his emotion with a sneer. "This, sir, is, I suppose, the first-fruits of your fraternal intercession," he said. "It is truly creditable to your heart."

"Oh, Frank!" cried Lady Eleanor, laying her hand tenderly upon his arm, "do not imbitter your own feelings and your brother's by useless taunts. Go with him! go with him! in God's name! Do not I make a sacrifice?" she added, in a lower voice, whose tone was sunk, not for concealment apparently,—for I could distinguish every word,—but from deep feeling and the consciousness of much that could not be forgotten. "Do I not sacrifice hope, and joy, and affection, by that very counsel? Do I not give myself up to tears, and memory, and regret?"

"Ellen!" said my brother, pressing her hand in his, "it cannot be! I cannot, and I will not be commanded by a boy,—and that boy a brother who has wronged me."

"Indeed, indeed, Frank!" I replied, pained and softened by the deep agitation under which I saw him writhe—"indeed I have not wronged you; nor do I seek to command you, as you fancy: no, not for a moment. Look here! But promise me to march to-morrow at five, and I tear the supersedure at once, resume my place at the head of my troop, and serve under your orders as before. This permission I extorted from Lord Goring, and it was granted as the reward of what I had done in that morning's skirmish. If you will march, the supersedure is at an end. 'Indeed, Frank, I act from affection, and not from rivalry or ambition.'"

As I spoke, I laid my hand on his, which was as cold as death. His first impulse was to snatch it hastily from me; but a moment after, he gave it me again, saying, in a tone of deep melancholy, "I believe you, Harry! I believe you after all! I feel I have done you wrong. But it matters not,—I am ruined and undone for ever! My honour and my character are lost, and must be lost! I cannot go!—Do not press me further; I cannot go. I know the risk and the consequences—but I cannot go. Take the command, Harry! go and gain honour and glory, and distinguish your name! Fate plays the game against me, and I must lose."

I tried to persuade him to better things. I used every argument, every motive, every reason that I could devise. Lady Eleanor forgot all, and clung to his arm in tears, beseeching him to obey the orders he had received: but it was in vain. He grasped my hand firm in his. He pressed her to his bosom; and then turned to the door, repeating, "It cannot be! Where is my servant, I wonder?" he added, somewhat wildly. "Where is my servant?"

"I am afraid, Frank," I said, following him towards the door, "I am afraid that wherever that villain Gabriel is, it will become my duty to put him under arrest, as there is much reason to believe that he holds private correspondence with the rebels."

"Do not! do not, Harry!" exclaimed my brother, turning eagerly, and taking both my hands. "Do not, if you love me—I would not for the world—for heaven's sake do not! Grant me this boon at least, Harry Masterton," he added, imploringly. "Leave him with me. He is both a villain and a knave, capable of any thing that is base or mean. A slave that I shall some day have cause to shoot through the head; but till that day comes, he must remain with me."

"Well!" I answered, seeing evidently that the fanatical villain had possessed himself of some of my brother's secrets, which gave him a dangerous power. "Well! be it as you would, Frank; and be-

lieve me—oh believe me, that in all I have done, my first wish has been to shield your honour and to promote your welfare.”

He held my hand as if he were about to speak ; but the words failed him ; and turning away once more, he left the room.

Lady Eleanor still remained wiping the tears from her eyes. When she turned them towards me, the same bright flush came over her cheek, which within the last two days had been so familiar with her face ; but I could not help thinking that I saw a degree of gladness there also, which one might very well reconcile even with Frank's refusal to comply with her entreaties. It was impossible, indeed, to feel angry at her rejoicing that he staid. She had done far more than I expected, in begging him to go. I felt that in some sort she had acted nobly ; and but small allowance for human weakness was necessary, to pardon the internal joy I was certain that she experienced at the prospect of his remaining by her side, even though his honour called on him to leave it.

I thought, however, that I could not with propriety remain in her house any longer ; and advancing towards the place where she sat, I proceeded to express my sense of the part she had taken in my discussion with my brother.

“I have to thank you most sincerely, madam,” I said, “and my gratitude is not at all diminished from having been mingled in some degree with surprise. I acknowledge I did not expect you to second my efforts so zealously as you have done.”

Her influence over my brother, and her feelings towards him, had been very little concealed during the whole dispute ; but the allusion to it still agitated and confused her.

“You do not know, sir,—oh you little know what a woman can do,” she replied. “But I hope, Captain Masterton,” she added hastily, as if willing to say no more on such a theme, “or rather, as I should now call you, Colonel Masterton—”

"Nay, lady," I interposed, "do not call me by that name. I have no intention of taking that title; and only lead the regiment to its duty as the second in command. I cannot but entertain a hope—a vain one I am afraid—that some fortunate chance may still screen my poor brother from the consequences of his obstinacy. But what were you about to honour me by observing?"

"I was merely going to say," she replied, "that I hope you will not quit my poor dwelling to-night. Perhaps your brother may change his intentions, perhaps he may be brought to yield. I see," she added, with a heightening colour—"I see how deep is your affection for him; I see all that you would willingly sacrifice for his welfare, and I love you for the love you bear him. Stay then, Captain Masterton, stay, and once more join your efforts to mine. I will endeavour—indeed I will endeavour—to shake his determination."

"I have known him, Lady Eleanor," I replied, "for many years before you did; and I am convinced that his determination cannot be moved. I must now retire, to prepare the regiment for its march; but I will have the honour of waiting upon you before nightfall, both to take my leave, and to hear my brother's final resolution."

"Stay yet one moment, sir," she said, rising and laying the long rounded fingers of her beautiful hand upon my arm, with a look full of dignity and fire, though the blush was deeper than ever on her face and neck. "I am about to speak to you for myself, and of myself. You have shown yourself in every act that I have seen you perform, and by every word that I have heard you speak, a gentleman and a man of honour. Tell me, then, what should such a person do, if a lady's fair fame and reputation were placed in his hands by her confidence in his courtesy, and her efforts to second his noble purpose?"

"Forget, as far as he can, madam," I replied; "and those things which memory will retain should be for ever as if forgotten."

"Then, sir, pledge me your honour," she said, earnestly, "that all which has fallen this day from my lips, or from those of your brother concerning me, shall be as you say—as if forgotten."

"I do, madam," I answered; "every thing but your energetic endeavours to make him do his duty."

"You give me your promise?" she asked.

"Most solemnly!" I answered, and bowing over the hand she extended to me, I quitted the apartment and the house. The whole day was spent in making the necessary preparations for leaving the quarters we had occupied so much too long. As I now wished to detain Master Walter Dixon without entering into any discussion with him, I did not visit the barn in which he was confined; but took care that he should be supplied with every thing that was necessary to his comfort. The second messenger who had been despatched to Lord Norwich, and whose name, by-the-way, was Anthony Halt, had been less fortunate than William Fells, and had not returned at all. What became of him I know not, for I never saw him after.

Notwithstanding the evil which our delay was likely to occasion to the royal cause, the regiment itself was recruited by its stay both in numbers and in condition; and knowing the small force which Lord Goring commanded—small even after the junction of the other forces—I contemplated with pleasure the thoughts of leading him so strong and well-appointed a reinforcement.

Such feelings, nevertheless, did not make me at all the less anxious that Frank should be moved from his unhappy resolution, which I knew not whether to attribute to the mad passion which had acquired such sway over his mind, to the obduracy of determination which he had always displayed, or to some circumstances unknown to myself. I was rather inclined to believe that the latter was in a degree the case, though I doubted not that his insane love for Lady Eleanor made him gladly seize any thing which gave him a fair excuse for remaining near her.

The last effort, however, I was resolved to make ; and accordingly returned to the mansion-house late in the evening. It is useless to relate all the particulars of my visit,—the result was the same. Frank was still as immoveable as marble ; and though Lady Eleanor, drowned in tears, entreated him to go on the path of duty, he continued not only steady to his purpose, but seemed in some degree hurt at her again urging the request, saying that he should certainly stay if she would extend her hospitality to him *one* night longer. It was all painful and all fruitless ; and, feeling it to be so, I took my departure, leaving, at my brother's request, a guard of twenty men in the stables belonging to the house. As I descended the avenue alone, I saw a dark figure cross a distant part of the lawn, and pausing in the moonlight, seem to fix a meditating gaze upon the house. I determined to approach it ; but before I could take three steps beyond the shadow of the trees, it was gone ; and I could discover no trace of it in the brief space of time that I could afford to the search.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR trumpets sounded to boot and saddle at four o'clock in the morning ; and not long after, we began our march. The world was yet in all its young freshness, and there was a soothing sense of tranquillity in the whole scene that spread calmly over the heart. The early red of the dawn was still upon a flight of light feathery clouds that hung upon the zenith ; and the sky looked like the breast of some fairy bird, whose plumage was dappled of azure, and pink, and gold. The same rosy hue seemed melted in the very air ; and as the slanting sunbeams poured more and more fully upon the world, every object that they

touched caught the lustrous tint of morning, while the long blue shadows cast by the horizontal rays, contrasted, yet harmonized, with the light whose absence gave them existence. There was a sound of wakening through the air too; the matutinal birds, one by one, were bursting into song; and a distant hum told that the busy world of insects had begun their daily labour and delight. The voice of thanksgiving for the bright gift of day seemed to rise from creation to the gates of heaven; and every thing, from the diamond dew-drops clustered on the leaves of grass, to the effulgent sky under which they shone, appeared robed in splendour for the morning sacrifice.

The sound of our trumpets was harsh upon my ear, and, with all youth's dreams of glory, I confess I would far rather have enjoyed that calm morning in the woods, or by the sea-side, or on the brow of some wide-looking hill—by myself, or with Emily Langleigh alone—than leading the brightest of mortal hosts to the most glorious of triumphant fields. Oh, how the pomp and the pageantry, the bustle and the display, were rebuked by the sublime glance of the early morning!

I could not but feel melancholy as I gave the command to march; and the words, "God bless ye, Cavaliers!" uttered by some loyal maiden, who stood to see us depart, with four or five other damsels who had risen with the sun for the same purpose, was the first thing that recalled to my mind the justice of the cause in which our swords were drawn, and reconciled me to the thoughts of war, under the reproving voice of the calm scene around.

I had waited for some time after the first trumpets had sounded, with the faint hope that their notes might awake my brother from both his real and figurative sleep; but he came not, and we were obliged to begin our march. Still, every step I took, I became more and more anxious on his account. "What could I say to Lord Goring?" I asked myself. "What would be the inevitable consequences of the report I had to make?" It was sad and terrible to think of,—the

blasting of his own fame—the agony it would bring upon his father. The soldiers themselves were evidently already commenting upon the absence of their proper commander; and, as I rode back towards the rear to see that the prisoner, Walter Dixon, was safely guarded, I heard the name of the colonel repeated more than once. Calling the captain of the second troop to me, a poor but honourable gentleman in our neighbourhood, I began to speak with him on the subject; and hinted, I am afraid rather insincerely, that business of a particular nature detained my brother behind us.

“Oh yes, sir!” he replied, “we all know what the business is; but we almost thought—I beg your pardon for speaking so boldly—but we almost thought it was a pity you did not prevent him from fighting this duel, for the king’s service surely should not be postponed to a private quarrel.”

“A duel!” I said, musing, and taken somewhat by surprise. “How did it get abroad that he was going to fight a duel?”

“Why, sir,” replied he, “I forgot you were away at the time; but yesterday hot words were seen to pass between the colonel and some gentleman in black, by one of the sentinels, in the avenue behind the house; and both laid their hands upon their swords, but some one coming up, they parted. The same person in black we suppose it was who came to the village some hours afterward, and hired a man to carry a billet to the colonel. This got about in the regiment, and we never doubted that there was a duel toward, when we found that the colonel did not command us this morning.”

These were tidings indeed; and tidings for which I would have given millions a few hours before. The story was not improbable, and many circumstances which I had remarked confirmed it. I had myself beheld a stranger in the woods, habited as described in black. No quarrel, it is true, could have taken place between him and Frank after our meeting, but it might have done so before; and the note which I had seen put into my brother’s hands had appeared, from the

manner in which he received it, to have been something very interesting, though nothing unexpected. And yet I did not think that for any common affair of the kind—a thing that might at any time be settled in ten minutes—Frank would neglect his duty to his king and to his own honour. But then again I remembered how deadly pale Lady Eleanor had turned when she beheld that stranger; and I doubted not that the quarrel had some reference to her. I concluded, indeed, without much proof, that he was in all probability some rejected lover, and the cause of contention his pretensions to the lady; and I supposed that some peculiar circumstances with which I was unacquainted prevented its hostile discussion an hour or two earlier than the time proposed.

What was to be done, became the next consideration. Had I known before that such a meeting was in agitation, I should have scrupled at no means to compel Frank either to hurry it to a termination before our departure, or to postpone it to some future time. As I came to think further, it struck me that even then it was not too late; it wanted still a quarter to six o'clock, and we were within seven miles of Maidstone. My horse was as fresh as the daylight; and I had two led horses with the regiment, to mount me at the moment of need. In two hours and a quarter I could surely ride twenty-two miles, and do a great deal of business besides. My resolution was instantly taken, and devolving the command on the senior captain, I called out William Fells and another resolute fellow from the ranks, bade them follow me, and galloped back towards Penford-bourne as hard as I could go. The road was good, and the ground easy, and we flew over it like a passing cloud. In five-and-thirty minutes we reached the low park wall, at about a mile from the house; and I paused to consider whether my horse could clear it. As I did so, the clashing of swords struck my ear, and I was over in a moment; a turn round the copsewood brought me to the end of a broad green alley, about a hundred yards down which appeared four men two of

whom were deep in eager and desperate conflict, the others stood by, and at the coming of myself and my two followers, a sudden exclamation gave notice that the two lookers-on at least were aware of our approach. I dashed on, resolved at all risks to put a stop to the matter for a time, if for no longer; but before I could reach the spot, in a rapid pass, one of the combatants lunged wide of his mark, reeled back, lost his balance, and fell. The other, followed by one of the two spectators, dashed into the wood, exclaiming, "Not enough yet; we must meet again!" and on arriving on the ground, I found Frank lying on the grass, and bleeding from two severe wounds which seemed to have been draining him of his heart's blood for long before he fell. A stream of gory drops towards the corpse, told that his opponent had not passed unscathed; and Gabriel Jones, who had made the fourth of the party, was now busily and skilfully stanching his master's wounds.

"What do you here, Harry?" exclaimed my brother, raising himself on his arm, as I rode up. "Get you gone, in God's name! I am but little hurt. That cursed faintness made me fall; but I am better now as I lie down. Get thee gone, Harry, to the regiment! I am little hurt, indeed."

"Verily, God be praised, what his honour says is true," added Gabriel. "By the special intervention of Providence, which never deserts those destined and elected to be vessels of grace, the sword of the unrighteous man has not touched any mortal part, and though he be faint even unto death, yet shall he do well."

I knew the rascal to be no bad surgeon, and therefore derived great consolation from his assurance, especially as Frank, even after having ceased to speak, motioned me to my horse again, and seemed anxious for my departure. No time indeed was to be lost; and after endeavouring as far as possible to ascertain the truth in regard to the injuries he had received; and having satisfied myself that they were only dangerous

from the immense loss of blood he had sustained, I gave directions to one of the troopers to stay with Gabriel Jones, and convey his wounded officer to the mansion-house. I then knelt by my brother's side, and whispered the assurance that I had merely taken the command of the regiment as his second, and that the matter of the supersedure was unknown to any but ourselves. His present circumstances I added, would be a full excuse to Lord Goring for his absence from the regiment; and that I hoped to see him both better and happier when I returned, if ever that took place.

He pressed my hand affectionately, though faintly; and again motioned me to depart. I accordingly sprang upon my horse, and resumed with all speed the road towards Maidstone.

For some time I rode on with my reveries uninterrupted by any other sound than the clatter of my horse's feet: but in less than half an hour, the wind, which set strong in our faces, brought the report of artillery. Another and another dull, heavy roar succeeded the first, and although I had given especial orders not to quit the walk at which the troops were proceeding when I left them till I returned again, I feared lest they might hurry on at the sound, and, giving my horse the spur, never quitted the gallop till I came up with the rear of the regiment. The noise of the artillery was now incessant, and mounting a fresh horse, I put my men into a quick pace, and hurried forward towards the rendezvous, though the hour appointed had not yet arrived.

As I passed backwards and forwards, almost all the officers found an opportunity to ask concerning my brother; "Sadly wounded, but not dead," was my general answer; and I took occasion, as I rode a moment by each troop, to notice the animating voice of the cannon, and to speak of the strife to which we were fast approaching, as the thing that all brave men must most desire.

Both men and officers were all eager enough; and there was a slight degree of rivalry between the troop

which had already gained some glory in the field and those which had been left behind, which promised emulation—one of the best roads to great success.

The two miles which the regiment was distant from Maidstone when I rejoined it were passed as rapidly as possible; and I am afraid that more than one pannier full of eggs and chickens were overturned by the troopers in their eagerness to advance, as they almost ran down a number of peasants and market-women, who were hastening away from a town where hard blows were for the time the only marketable commodities. Nearer and nearer as we came, the scene of confusion became greater, the roar of the cannon more loud; but mingled and, as it were, supported by a thousand other sounds, which easily directed the ear to the scene of strife. Just as we were about to turn out of the road, upon the little green where we had been directed to wait, something loud whistled past my head; and, at the same instant, as it seemed, a cannon-ball struck a young pollard elm-tree, in the hedgerow, and the upper part, with a tremendous crash, fell across the road before me. I was startled for a moment, I own; but, knowing the effect of trifles upon large bodies of men, I made a great effort to recover myself, and without, I believe, any pause, or perceptible change of demeanour, I leaped my horse over the fallen mass, and pursued my way. The troopers followed, most of them with a light laugh, and in a moment after we were on the green before the little alehouse called the Bush.

The scene of confusion now before our eyes was tremendous. Clouds of smoke were rolling over the green, from the slope of the hill beyond; on which, in dim and confused masses, we could see the forces of the Roundheads and the Cavaliers engaged in deadly strife. The ruinous effect of the cannon-balls was visible in all the houses round about; and overturned carts, dead bodies, wounded men, abandoned arms, and plunderers already pillaging the dead, showed that the struggle had changed its scene, and had passed over the very spot where we stood.

It still wanted ten minutes of the hour which had been assigned for my arrival; but in such a case, it seemed to me that to stand idle waiting for orders would be worse than acting on my own responsibility; but in the smoke and confusion, I could not ascertain whether the dark masses interposed between me and the hill were rebels or Cavaliers.

Halting the men for a moment, I rode forward to the other side of the green, where it terminates at the summit of a steep bank, under which passes the high road, and which commanded a better view of the field. But it was in vain I did so; the smoke was so thick that I could only distinguish long rows of pikes, and dark columns of troops, bodies of cavalry whirling here and there, like flights of plovers, mingled altogether with the sudden flashes of artillery and musketry, and the occasional glance of a steel cap or cuirass. I could make nothing of it; and as I rode back towards the regiment, I was looking about among the wounded Cavaliers who were strewed here and there upon the green, for some one capable of giving me information as to which was the royal army; when a little boy, apparently not twelve years old, without hat, or shoes, or stockings, ran up to the side of my horse, and eying me attentively all the way, followed me to the head of my men. The moment, however, that he saw me approach close to them, he said, in an inquiring tone, "Colonel Masterton?"

"Well, my little man," I said, surprised at hearing my own name, with my brother's rank attached to it. "What is it?"

"From the general!" he said, in the same laconic style, holding up to me a little bit of crumpled paper, in which I found written with a pencil:—

"We are forced to retreat before superior numbers. If possible, make a circuit through the skirts of the town, and charge the enemy's left flank, while I extricate my infantry. At all events, make a diversion by a charge, cut your way through, and join me.

"NORWICH."

"The boy will lead you," was added below; and though such a guide seemed a very insecure trust for the safety of so many men, I had, of course, nothing to do but obey. "Can you bring me by some by-path to the left of the enemy's line, my man?" I demanded.

"Yes!" was all the reply, and off he set before me like a shot. I had hardly time to put the regiment in motion and follow, before he had made a circuit round the green to a spot where a narrow lane led down among some dull houses at the back of the town. Seeing that our little conductor ran like the wind, I hurried our pace, and without a moment's pause for thought or reflection, he threaded half a dozen intricate turnings, at every break in which we could hear the voice of the battle roaring on our right-hand. At last he stopped at the entrance of a road which turned in that direction; and suddenly bounding up by my horse's side, as if to reach my ear, he said in a low quick tone, "Now take care, you are upon them."

Almost as he spoke, I spurred forward and turned into the road. It seemed to have been but a cart-way between two houses into the fields beyond, and was not altogether twenty yards long; so that at once the battle again broke upon my sight; but now much nearer than before, and with my position reversed in regard to the field. The wind here set from me, and blew the smoke away, so that I could distinguish plainly the objects that were in the foreground. The general plan of the field, however, and the positions of the two armies, I confess I neither saw nor understood.

A small park of artillery, which seemed extremely well served, and a considerable body of heavy horse left to guard it, were the first things that struck my sight; and the same glance informed me at once, by the plain, rude habiliments of the soldiers, that the horse I saw were Roundheads. They were placed a little higher on the ground than we were, and apparently left for the specific purpose of defending the cannon. The troopers were sitting idle on their horses, gazing over the field with the long line of their backs and of

their horses' croups towards me. To charge them was of course my determination, and I brought up the regiment as fast as possible.

The first thing that made the rebels aware of our presence was our forming about a hundred yards in their rear ; and even then, more than one of them turned his head, and seemingly taking us for some of their own regiments, did not give the alarm. At length a trooper more observant than the rest, remarked our colours and there was an immediate movement among them ; but by this time we were ready to charge, and were upon them before they could properly wheel.

I saw a good deal of wavering and confusion along their line as we came up ; and just as we were closing—when each man could distinguish his antagonist as perfectly as if they sat beside each other—when every feature, grim and tense, with the eagerness of attack and defence, was as clear as in a picture—the hearts of some of their troopers, shaken by surprise and disarray, failed ; and they attempted to turn their bridles from the shock. Immense confusion ensued ; and with a loud shout we poured into their broken ranks, cut down the artillery-men at their guns, and drove back the flying cavalry upon the picketmen of the left wing. Many of the rebels, however, stood manfully in spite of the flight of their companions ; and one little knot in the centre, refusing all quarter, were absolutely hewn from their saddles.

The effect of our charge, I afterward found, had been great upon the fortunes of the day. The artillery of the enemy's left, which had thrown Lord Norwich's retreating infantry into confusion, being now silenced, order was restored in that part of his army ; and at the same time, as the parliamentary pikemen were in many places trodden down by their own cavalry, an opportunity was afforded of rallying the royalist horse to keep the enemy in check ; while Lord Norwich concentrated his troops upon the road, and the retreat assumed a firm and regular order.

At first, after having gained the height, and caught a

glance of the position of the various forces, I fancied that a few brisk charges, while the Roundheads were still in confusion, would have turned the day in our favour, as on the former occasion at Wrotham. But the whole business, as I soon found, was of a very different nature. The part of the parliamentary army which I saw was nothing but their left wing, which had been extended for the purpose of turning the right flank of the royalists, and intercepting their retreat. Lord Norwich had extended his right to counteract this movement; but in doing so the superior numbers of the enemy, and the well-directed fire of their artillery, had nearly effected the dispersion of his whole force; and our arrival in the rear of the rebels was only in time to save that wing of the royal army.

The confusion of their cavalry and the capture of their artillery was seen by the parliamentary generals as soon as by the Cavaliers: and while a small body of our friends came down to support me, a large mass of pikemen and a regiment of cavalry began to rise over the slope which concealed the main body of the Roundheads from my sight. Success gives boldness; and I was just about to charge them, notwithstanding the vast superiority of their numbers, when an officer rode up to me from Lord Goring.

"You are to bring in your regiment, sir, with all speed," he said, "in order to cover the retreat of the infantry."

"Where is Lord Goring?" I demanded.

"Yonder, sir!" was the reply. "Just beyond that cuckoldy regiment of London horse, to the left of those coming up the hill."

"Then my shortest way will be through them," I replied.

"The shortest way, sir, but the roughest, perhaps," answered the officer, with somewhat of a sneer, which would have sent me through them if they had been a legion of fiends, instead of a regiment of London burghers.

"You had better keep away to the left, young gen-

tleman; and so over the rise without meddling with them."

"Take through the hollow way, and you will be upon them before they see you," said a small voice near me; and looking down, I saw, to my surprise, the little guide who had brought me Lord Goring's first commands. It was evident that he was right in his counsel. A way cut through the soil to some lime-pits intersected a great part of the field; and as the Londoners were retreating, they would probably be in the very act of crossing it at the moment I arrived in their neighbourhood. The poor boy who pointed it out, however, could not pass without some notice; and throwing him some money, I bade him get off the field as fast as he could.

"I have been in more battles than ever you were," replied the boy; "but bid some one take me up, and I will show you the way."

He was mounted in a moment behind one of the troopers; and betaking ourselves to the hollow way, we followed the lime-road till it again opened out upon the field. To my no small consternation, however, when we were again upon level ground I found the London burghers, as I expected, it is true, between me and Lord Goring; but my path had been marked, and the body of horse and pikemen which had been sent to reinforce the left wing was now wheeling on my flank, within a hundred and fifty yards of me.

The situation was critical; but a moment's pause would have been ruin. The only hope was to cut through the Londoners before the others could come up; and ordering the trumpeters to sound a charge, we dashed in among them. They were taken by surprise: their line was extended and shallow; ours was narrow and deep; and our whole purpose being to force our passage, we poured our squadrons at once upon their centre, and cleared ourselves a way by the very impetus of our course. Not that the citizens fought amiss. Not a man attempted to turn his bridle, as they had done in the first regiment we attacked; and I do

believe that the two troops with which we came in contact were annihilated where they stood,—a great part cut down, and many trodden under the horses' feet. Nor did we ourselves suffer a little; for we afterward found that nearly a hundred men had fallen in our ranks during the brief moment which was required to cut our way through. I was slightly wounded myself in the face and in the arm; but not so much so as to disable me in any degree; and we continued the same rapid pace with which we had advanced, till we reached the foot of the hill from which Lord Goring was directing the efforts of the cavalry that remained upon the field. The last companies of infantry were now retreating easily along the high road; and the firing had ceased on both parts. But dense masses of the parliamentary horse were seen coming up in all directions; and it seemed evident that we should still have a very severe and difficult task to effect our retreat before so superior an enemy.

Leaving the regiment at the foot of the hill, I rode up to the general, who instantly welcomed me in the midst of all the orders he was giving. "Welcome, welcome, and a thousand thanks, Colonel Masterton!" he exclaimed. "So your brother would not come?" he added, in a lower voice.

"He is desperately wounded, my lord—" I replied; but he would not suffer me to finish my sentence, exclaiming, "I am glad of it! I am glad of it! Better be killed, sir, in a noble field like this, than throwing away his honour in sloth and inactivity. You have yourself done nobly; but there is no time for long thanks. We must be now drawing off after the infantry. Fairfax thinks he has won a battle; but I can tell him, with six thousand men, half raw recruits, to effect our retreat in such order before twenty thousand, is worth three better victories than ever he gained."

The movements of the enemy were by this time slackening in activity; and drawing off the regiments of cavalry one by one, Lord Goring continued his retreat with comparative ease. The enemy's horse con-

tinued to follow us, it is true; and twice I received orders to face about and charge them; but before noon we could hear their trumpets of recall sounding in all directions; and it became evident that the parliamentary generals had abandoned the pursuit.

As soon as it was judged advisable to halt, I proceeded to inspect the regiment as carefully as possible; and in ascertaining our loss, which had been very severe, I found that the prisoner, Walter Dixon, had contrived to effect his escape in the hurry and confusion of the events through which we had just passed. To tell the truth, I was not particularly sorry to get rid of him, now that our junction with Lord Goring had taken place; but at the same time, we had gained an addition to the regiment, for the little boy who had guided us so well had remained sticking close to the back of the trooper who had taken him up, and seemed quite contented with his quarters. What to do with him embarrassed me a good deal, but I reserved that question for future consideration; and, with the usual fate of all things delayed, it met with a thousand new postponements, till accident took the affair into its own hands.*

CHAPTER XII.

It is always a sad review, the inspection of a regiment after a battle, even when the men gone were but little known to their officers; the number of familiar faces lost to his eye, the silence of voices whose tone had been heard a thousand times answering the roll-call, and many a little circumstance by which the dead were linked to memory must render it a melancholy task. But in those instances where the regiment

* A somewhat different account of these transactions is given by Lord Clarendon, but the passage in which he speaks of this encounter is so brief as to leave all the minor details in doubt; nor indeed could his relation be taken in preference to that of an eyewitness.

has been raised almost entirely from the tenantry or the neighbours of the person who commands it, where each face is familiar as his brother's, and where there are a multitude of common interests, memories, and affections between his own bosom and that of every man he leads to the field, it is scarcely possible to tell how painful is the examination which exhibits so many lost. These feelings of personal and individual concern for every man under my command made me perhaps hurry to the investigation before any of the officers of other regiments thought fit to proceed to the task. I found many missing, and among the rest the saddle of poor William Fells was vacant.

I had scarcely concluded when I was called to Lord Goring, and hastened instantly to obey the summons. I was directed by the corporal who brought the command to a small inn with the sign of a bull's head painted in deep crimson over the door; and entering the passage, I made my way through a crowd of persons, some civil, some military, that were hanging about, with countenances in which both fatigue and anxiety were very manifest. At a small, rickety, unpainted deal door, whose thin and shapeless form but little impeded the sound of the discussion which was going on within from reaching the ears of those without, stood a sentinel with musket in hand and match lighted, and that appearance of stolid deafness in his countenance which it behooves all sentinels near thin doors and angry debates to assume. Whom he was stationed to keep out, and whom to admit, Heaven knows; but he made no difficulty of permitting me to enter; and, in a moment after, I was in the presence of about twenty or five-and-twenty gentlemen, who seemed to be doing their best to forget the gifts of their station and education in the fury of discussion.

One—a florid burly squire with no very military air or courtly demeanour—was standing up at the side of the table, round which the rest were seated, roaring away a heap of unconnected and hesitating sentences, with a face fiery between the anger of opposition and

the consciousness of talking nonsense. At a little distance sat a more tranquil person, tearing to pieces a very good pen which he had gathered from an inkstand in the midst. He was not interrupting the other, it is true; but he was muttering to himself from time to time, loud enough to be heard by every one but the speaker,—“That’s false! You’re an idiot! Blundering ass!” and various other courteous ejaculations of the same nature.

Three more gentlemanly men on the other side of the table appeared, with their heads close together, conversing in a whisper, without attending to any one else; while Lord Norwich was sitting at the head of the room with a roll of letters and other papers under his hand. His countenance was full of anger and vexation; and from time to time a scornful smile curled his lip while the other was speaking, which certainly did not improve the declaimer’s oratory, or calm the passion by which he was evidently affected.

“So!” thought I, as I entered, “this is a council of war, is it? it wants but little, it would seem, to become a field of battle.”

So absurd, indeed, was the whole scene to a person whose passions had not been worked up to the same pitch, that I could have laughed notwithstanding all the sorrowful details which I had been lately examining, had I not been restrained by the expression of deep anxiety and vexation which I beheld in some of the finer and nobler countenances around me.

“You may sneer, my lord! you may sneer!” said the burly orator, just as I was entering; “but I’ll tell you what,—it does not at all signify,—the gentlemen of Kent, I say,—the gentlemen of Kent will not be thrown away in this manner. Why, did not I now, and my brother,—did not we join the king’s army willingly, with all the force we could make? and did not I tell you, if you would march then, half the country would join you as you went? and did not you listen to Edward Hales there, instead of to me, and have we not now lost half our men and more?”

“Not by the course I pursued, sir!” replied Lord Norwich; “had I listened to your advice, we should not have lost half, but the whole. However, sir, to end this matter at once, I am, I believe, commander-in-chief for his majesty, and in his majesty’s name I have to tell you that, with thanks for your service, we do not want volunteers to command us; we want men to fight, sir, and not to dictate.”

“Fight, sir! And have I not fought?” demanded the other, in the same outrageous tone. “Have not all my men fought? Did not my poor brother fight? ay, sir! did he not fight till he dropped at this cursed Maidstone? and did I not see him, when last I saw him in life, waving his hand, and crying ‘Long live King Charles?’ ay, when he was down beneath the horses’ feet!”

“You had better dismiss the council, my lord,” said one of the gentlemen on the general’s right-hand.—“This is turning out ill.”

Lord Norwich took his advice; and cutting across the person who was speaking, he said, with a grave and melancholy expression, “I am deeply grieved for your brother, Sir Charles, and deeply grieved for the loss of your fine body of tenantry; but I hope that matters may not be so bad,—your brother may only be wounded. In the mean time,” he continued, seeing the other about to break in upon him, “in the mean time, I will consider what every one has said,—especially what you have said, Sir Charles; and in an hour or two, when we are all calmer, I may perhaps again call for your advice. At present, I think it will be better for you all to go and refresh yourselves, and I will receive the reports of our numbers, and confer with you hereafter, gentlemen.”

So saying, he rose, and his example was followed by the rest. Before they took their departure, however, the members of the council, if so it could be called, broke up into two or three groups, and conversed in these separate parties for some time. Lord Norwich himself spoke quick and eagerly, in the recess of the window, with the two gentlemen who had sat next to

him ; and the last words which were uttered by one of his advisers were, "Most decidedly, my lord. It is a step that, depend upon it, is now inevitable ; and the sooner it is taken, the greater chance of safety to all concerned."

"Well—well," replied Lord Norwich, slowly, "be it so ! Now, gentlemen," he added, turning to the others, "by your leave, I will receive the reports from the regiments."

The whole party, with the exception of the two who had been speaking with the commander-in-chief, took the hint he gave, and withdrew. I was about to follow, with another officer, who, like myself, had not sat down at the council board ; but Lord Norwich made us a sign to remain. After watching the rest out, he walked forward, and closed the door ; and then made two or three slow turns in the room, with the letters which he still held in his hand clasped with an intensity which bespoke more mental emotion than he chose to appear upon his countenance. At length he resumed his seat at the head of the table ; and calling the two who seemed his most confidential friends to his side, he begged us all to be seated ; and after thinking deeply for a few minutes, he turned to me and the other officer who had entered the room nearly at the same moment as myself ; and to him Lord Goring first addressed himself. "Sir John Powel," he said, "your regiment, though one of the most gallant in the service, appears to have suffered less to-day than usual. Have you any guess how many men you can muster ?"

"About seven hundred, my lord," replied the other ; "but it is only a guess. However, certainly not less than six hundred and fifty."

"And you, Colonel Harry Masterton," rejoined the commander-in-chief, "what number, think you, can you bring into the field—effective men, I mean ?"

"Certainly not more than three hundred and fifty, my lord," I replied, "if you do not mean me to include the badly wounded."

"Good God !" exclaimed Goring. "They have

thinned us indeed. I did not think I saw so many of your saddles empty, sir?"

"There are not so many killed as there are so badly wounded as not to be fit to sit their horses," I answered. "I have just gone over the roll, my lord, and I am certain of my accuracy."

"I do not doubt, sir," replied the general; "I do not doubt it. Retire, gentlemen, for a moment, but do not quit the door."

Sir John Powel and I immediately obeyed, and were recalled almost as soon; when my companion was dismissed with commands simply to inspect his regiment, and take every care that the horses were supplied with forage, and the men with food. I remained longer, and received orders to march, towards nightfall, upon a little hamlet which I had passed between Penfordbourne and Maidstone, taking with me a regiment of newly raised foot. The enemy, Lord Goring explained to me, had established there an outpost, and it was the object of the royalists to conceal their farther march, and make the Roundheads believe that they were endeavouring to force their way once more towards London.

"The worst part of the story is now to be told you, Colonel Masterton," the general added. "You will attack the outpost, and no doubt immediately make yourself master of the hamlet; but after you have done so, you may march on in what direction you please."

So sudden and so strange an announcement forced from my lips the exclamation of "Good God!" But Lord Norwich proceeded without noticing my surprise.

"The regiment of foot which I send with you will, beyond all question, disperse before morning; at least, if it follow the plan that all our regiments here are doing; for not a night passes but we lose three or four hundred men. The case, sir, I am sorry to say, is quite hopeless. Had all the friends who promised to join me brought up their forces as I was marching on London, the king, sir, would have been at this moment upon his throne; but now I must abandon Kent, where

the royalists, as you may judge from the scene you have just witnessed, are more difficult to rule than the Roundheads are to beat. I must then make the best of my way towards Essex, and can only hope to cover my retreat by deceiving the enemy. Do as much as you can, therefore, to magnify the appearance of your forces. Extend your line; keep your trumpets sounding; send a troop round to the other side of the hamlet; kill as many of the cuckoldy skum as you can, but take no prisoners, lest, by escaping afterward, they betray your real numbers. Neither must you halt longer at the hamlet than just to refresh yourselves. Then, if you take my advice, you will retire into the fields, and disperse your foot; for if a hundred or two do stay with you, they will only embarrass you. After that, you can either try to join me in Essex, if you hear that we are there having any success; or endeavour to reach Wales, and fight it out with the Cavaliers in the mountains; or force your way back to Devonshire, and keep quiet till a more favourable moment."

It appeared to me that his lordship spoke very coolly of our probable fate. But I could pardon him, as his own, if he fell into the hands of the Roundheads, was likely to be worse. As the line of march laid down for me towards the enemy's outpost was across the country, I ventured to ask for a guide; upon which the commander demanded, with no small animation what had become of the little messenger he had sent me in the morning.

"He is with the regiment now, my lord," I replied: "can he serve to guide me to-night?"

"He can guide you to any part of the country," answered Lord Goring. "But if you carry him with you, Colonel Masterton, you must give me your word of honour that you will take such care of him as if he were the child of a dear friend. His father, sir, was as true a Cavalier as ever drew his sword. Many a flagon have we emptied together, and in many a hard field did he fight. This boy, sir, was born and bred in the midst of scenes that break one in to dangers and

difficulties early ; and in many a battle has he sat upon a baggage-wagon before he could walk, clapping his little hands at the braying of the trumpets and the roar of the artillery. When he was five years old, I have seen him running among the ranks where the shot was flying like hail, or mounted on the pommel of his father's saddle, heading the charge against pike and gun. He never forgets either place or person that he has once seen ; he never forgets a word that he has once heard ; he never misunderstands what you mean ; and every inch of Kent and Sussex he knows as well as a geographer. His father was killed about a year ago, and I lost sight of the poor lad ; but he came upon me suddenly at Maidstone, all in rags, and I vowed I would never let him quit me again. But, God help me ! 'tis not the first vow I have broken ; but he will be safer with you than with me. We used to call him Little Ball-o'-fire. But his true name is John Marston Hall."

I willingly promised to be kind to the dead soldier's boy, as far as circumstances would permit me to be kind to any one ; and then, having been forced to drink a cup of strong waters, which had been circulated pretty liberally among Lord Goring's council on their first arrival, I took my leave and returned to the regiment. I discovered little Ball-o'-fire in the midst of the troopers, questioning them with short, sharp interrogatories, which I found, by a casual word or two, referred to myself. The account given by the soldiers was, apparently, not very unfavourable ; for when I asked the boy if he would go with me, he looked up with his bright black eyes glistening with eagerness, and replied, " Yes,—over the world."

Unhappily, by this time there was many a vacant saddle in our ranks ; and many a poor fellow whom, it was evident, I should be forced to leave behind, to follow as they could when their wounds were whole again. There was no difficulty, therefore, in mounting poor little Ball-o'-fire ; but the care of my wounded men took me up till it was nearly time to depart. I succeeded, however, in getting them carried out of the line of the high

road, and distributed among some cottagers, who, for a trifling gratification, undertook to guard and take care of them; and although this was but frail security for their comfort and protection, I could do nothing better, and was forced to leave them, after having added as much as I could to their purses from my own little store.

When all this was done, the regiment numbered about three hundred and forty-seven effective men, and about forty more who could sit their horses, but were unfit for any active duty.

Our corps, however, was singular in one respect. Having come a length of way, and being all united in one community of feelings and remembrances, there was not one man had deserted; while the rest of Lord Goring's forces—either entirely levied or principally recruited in Kent—were spreading over the country by hundreds; and, indeed, as he proceeded on his retreat through the native places of his soldiers, the march of his army was like the progress of a carrier, who drops a part of his charge at every village by which he passes.

At the hour appointed every thing was prepared to set out; and having ascertained in person that the commander-in-chief had no further orders, I took my final leave, and gave the word to march.

Nothing of any consequence occurred during our progress. We arrived at the hamlet just at that dim moment of the night when the sun has quite set, and before the moon has risen, so that we were upon the outpost of the rebels before they were aware. Seeing little or no object in destroying the handful of men which the place contained, I endeavoured to restrict our efforts to making a great show and a great deal of noise, without spilling much blood. But the soldiers, especially the foot, were savage with the events of the morning, and the loss of their companions; and in despite of orders and entreaties, they gave no quarter. Some one also, either accidentally or intentionally, set fire to the hamlet; and a cruel piece of useless bar-

barity remains generally attributed to me, which I would have given my right hand to prevent. But such, I am afraid, is our general fate, either in good or bad. The things we strive with our whole strength to accomplish bring us no renown; and we, nine times out of ten, owe our fame or our infamy either to a trifle, an accident, or a misunderstanding.

The effect of our attack, nevertheless, was such as Lord Goring desired; and was perhaps more than he had expected. The fugitives from the burning hamlet magnified our strength, and for two days afterward, it was generally believed in the parliamentary army that the whole royalist force had pushed past their right; and much anxiety was entertained for the result. In the mean while, Lord Goring, with his companions, effected their passage into Essex; and after a time threw themselves into Colchester, on the memorable siege of which place I need not pause.

From the flames of the burning hamlet I drew off the forces with all speed; and crossing the fields, following the courses of the brooks and streams, and practising a thousand other manœuvres to conceal our line of retreat, I at length brought my men safely to a spot about six miles south-west from Maidstone. There I communicated to the remnant of a regiment of foot which had accompanied me the commands of Lord Goring; and though I heard a good deal of grumbling and profane swearing, I believe from my heart there was not a man in the ranks that was not very well contented with the order to disperse. Nay, more; I do not believe that there would have been one of them with me by the following morning. The next consideration became, how I might best effect my retreat with the cavalry to Penford-bourne, the direction of which I had by this time very nearly lost. Here, however, little Ball-o'-fire proved of no small service by his counsels.

"You will soon have the moon," he said, when he heard my difficulty; "and she must rise nearly behind the old castle. Till then, follow that star, and which-

ever way the road winds, turn back to the star again ; by which, at all events, we shall be getting nearer."

The character Lord Goring had given him made me trust much more implicitly to his advice than his age seemed to warrant ; and I did not find myself deceived. There were one or two dull clouds upon the edge of the sky, which cut off whatever portion of the evening light still lingered, at that period of the summer, about the line of the horizon ; but in a short time those clouds began to be tinged with red as from a fire, and I felt some alarm lest any part of the enemy's force should have been detached in that direction ; but, a few minutes after, some lines of silver mingled with the red on the edges of the vapours, and then the round disk of the summer moon, looking fiery and large through the horizontal mist, came forth above the clouds. The moment she did so, the whole scene was clear. The castle, with the rocks and woods among which it stood, rose in dark masses a little to the right of the beautiful orb, whose beams, pouring over the large old trees in the park at Penford-bourne, came gently down the valley through which we were advancing, picking out with bright light a thousand marks to guide us on our onward progress.

"Oh, but that's a nice old castle!" cried my little guide, who now rode by my side, mounted on an immense trooper's horse, which he managed like a giant. "Oh, but that is a nice old castle! I know places in it would conceal a thousand men."

"Indeed!" exclaimed I, remembering all that had passed when I last visited it. "Indeed! Whereabouts, my boy?"

"I cannot tell; but I can show," replied the boy; "and I would not like even to show without occasion."

"We may have occasion but too soon, for aught I know," replied I: "and besides, John Marston, I may have many reasons for wishing to know."

"Call me Ball-o'-fire," answered the boy, "if you love me, gallant sir, and I will show you all the places with my whole heart; but it is a pity that all the world

should know of a place which has hid many a brave and honest man, and may hide many another."

"It has hid many a rogue, little Ball-o'-fire," I rejoined, "and of that I have had good proof; but, however, by it for our landmark we shall soon reach Penford-bourne."

"Ay, and the fair Lady Eleanor Fleming," said the boy; "she was kind to me, two or three years since, and patted my head, and looked gentle at me; but her dark husband, Sir Andrew Fleming, frowned like a thundercloud all the time I was there."

"And how long has Sir Andrew Fleming been dead, my boy?" I demanded.

"Is he dead?" asked the boy. "They said he was jealous of her; and they parted, never to see each other again; but he did not die; and he went across the sea with Monsieur du Tillet, who had once been as badly wived, I've heard my father say, as Sir Andrew himself."

"And why do you say he was badly wived, little Ball-o'-fire?" I demanded again, anxious to get all the information on this subject I could as we marched on. "Perhaps it was his own fault he was unhappy."

"Still he was badly wived," replied the boy. "If I were to mingle honey and salt, would you not say it was ill mixed? He was as stern as a piece of artillery; and she was as light and as gay as a twinkling lark: and that was the reason I have heard them say that she hated him as much as he loved her: and love and hate in one house, you know, are like gunpowder and ball in a cannon,—the one is sure to drive the other out of window. But, oh, he is not dead; no, no, he cannot be dead. I heard of his being alive the other day."

"Pray God he be!" I mentally exclaimed; for I felt certain that Frank knew not of his existence; and I calculated strongly on that piece of news ending at once the mad and hopeless passion with which he was possessed.

Various and unconnected were the meditations to

which the boy's words gave rise in my mind: Frank had himself told me that Lady Eleanor Fleming was a widow; and, although I had heard the speakers at the old castle allude to the husband of the lady of whom they spoke, as soon as I became convinced that the one I had imagined to be Gabriel Jones was in fact not him, I had nearly forgotten the circumstance. I had some doubt, I had some fears indeed, that my brother's attachment had gone so far as to leave deep and painful impressions behind; but I knew the principles in which he had been educated, and I was not afraid that he would continue to nourish feelings such as those which he now experienced, when he learned that they were not only hopeless, but criminal. I felt sure that, on the belief of Lady Eleanor's perfect freedom from all ties, Frank had encouraged a passion which, however likely to meet with the most decided opposition from his father, was pure and honourable. Her conduct had not a similar excuse; and I concluded that much of the agitation and anxiety which her manner had so often betrayed had arisen in the consciousness of that fatal secret which must blast for ever the hopes she was encouraging in my brother. I trusted also that indignation at having been deceived might do something to deliver Frank from his thralldom; and I resolved to state the matter boldly to him, and rely on his better angel to make him willingly accompany the regiment in its retreat to Devonshire.

At all events, I saw that if he remained, he remained to destruction, in every sense; and I was determined to use means, perhaps unjustifiable under any other circumstances, to force him from a situation so perilous to himself. Then came remembrance of the severe wounds he had received, and the chance of his not being able to sit his horse, mingled with various wild speculations on the cause of the duel in which he had been engaged. But, before I could give all these whirling thoughts a tangible form and regular order, we were challenged by the sentry at the gates of the park, and once more halted our horses on the green at Penford-bourne.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALTHOUGH every consideration which ever in this world urged men to speed, now followed our footsteps to impel us on our course, yet by this time the horses were so fatigued that to proceed was out of the question ; and, obliged to pause for a day at Penford-bourne, I took what care I could to provide for the refreshment of the troopers and their chargers ; and casting myself down in the cottage which had first received us there, yielded to pure weariness and fell asleep.

Scarcely two hours' repose was allowed me, when I was awakened, according to my previous orders, at five o'clock. Leaving the regiment still to take what rest it could, I rose and walked up towards the mansion, the servants of which were generally early risers. I found the doors open, and one of the lackeys was showing me into the withdrawing-room, when we were met by Lady Eleanor herself, in such guise as led me to imagine that she had not pressed her pillow during the whole night. A faint exclamation of pleased surprise, and a look of joy that could not be mistaken, annihilated the cold and unfriendly feelings which had been gathering towards her in my bosom, and I could not believe that she was acting towards my brother on any systematic principle of evil, but chose rather to think that, carried away, like himself, by strong and irresistible passion, she saw not, she would not see, the guilt of nourishing it, and the greater guilt to which it tended.

So I judged of her ; and, whether I judged right or wrong, as I knew that it would be difficult to remove Frank from her dwelling, now that his duty no longer called him to the field, and now that his wounds gave him a fair excuse for lingering behind, I resolved in the

first place to strive for her co-operation; and as the means of gaining it, to show her if I could, that however strong she might feel in her own innocence, how great soever she might believe her own powers of resistance to be, the very encouragement of such a passion was criminal in itself; and but too sure, in the end, to undermine every virtuous principle.

The task, however, was one of course of difficulty and delicacy, which my youth and inexperience were scarcely qualified to attempt; and I paused long in considering how to begin. Holding the hand she had given me at our first meeting, I led her into the withdrawing-room, and closed the door, but still kept silence, every moment of which seemed but to increase my difficulty.

At length, after gazing at me anxiously for some minutes, she spoke herself. "I am afraid to ask," she said, in a low fearful voice, "the occasion of your speedy return. Your silence speaks but too plainly."

"The king's cause, madam," I replied, "is lost, at least in Kent. The numbers of the rebels have prevailed against honour and loyalty; and, after a severe struggle at Maidstone, yesterday morning, Lord Goring was again forced to retreat, though not without glory, for he repelled, during several hours, the fourfold force of the rebels; and then marched from the field in order and good array."

"'Tis bad news, indeed," said Lady Eleanor, "but, thank God, you have returned yourself, though, as I see, wounded. We have been very anxious for you here, ever since we heard the cannon yesterday. Your brother tells me," she continued, in a timid and faltering voice, "that he has seen you since the misfortunes of yesterday morning."

"He has, lady," I replied. "As soon as I heard the likelihood of such an event, I returned, in order to prevent it; but returned too late. For him, now, is my great anxiety. How he is to be removed to Devonshire, which must be done with all speed, is a matter of no small difficulty."

"Removed, Captain Masterton!" she exclaimed. "Impossible! You know not the state of weakness to which the loss of blood has reduced him."

"To leave him here, Lady Eleanor," I rejoined, "would be leading him with my own hand to the scaffold. The Roundheads will be here, probably, before two days are over; and do not suppose that they will be very careful in their mode of removing him to the Tower, where the block and axe will be as certainly his doom, as they would be mine if I were caught by the rebels."

"But I have interest among the parliamentary people," she replied, anxiously. "Essex was my cousin; Sir William Waller was my father's dear friend. I have other interest besides—great interest!"

"If, lady, you can take upon yourself the responsibility of ensuring my brother's life and liberty," I replied, "if you have the power to command his safety—"

"No! no! no!" she exclaimed, "I dare not risk it. I think I could; but if I were to fail, I should never forgive my boldness; death itself," she added passionately, "could not wipe out the memory of having devoted him to such a fate. Take him rather, sir—take him with you, whatever it may cost. Yet, stay! there is still a way. Could he not be concealed here till he is more fit to journey? You do not know that there is a private passage from the cellars of this house to the old castle on the hill. A chamber might easily be fitted up, where I could tend him myself, and where he might remain hidden from every other eye."

"I am afraid, lady," I replied, now seeing at once that Gabriel Jones might very well have been the speaker on the hill after all, and have returned by the passage to which she alluded, "I am afraid that the secret communications of that old castle are known to many other persons besides yourself. Might I suggest also," I added, "that your ladyship's husband might not perhaps—"

The blood rushed up to her face like fire, and suddenly covering her eyes with one hand, she held

forth the other towards me, as if imploring me to stop: The first agitated movement had broken through my sentence, but I felt now that the time was come for me to say what I had intended, if ever; and entirely altering my tone to one of the utmost gentleness, and taking the fair hand she had extended with the purpose of staying me, I proceeded:

“Listen to me, dear lady,” I said. “Far be it from me to wish, for one moment, to hurt your feelings, or to pain your heart. You cannot suppose, Lady Eleanor, that any young man of gentle breeding can see so fair and amiable a creature as you are, with the desire of wounding her for a moment. Believe me, then, when I say that I feel every interest in your happiness, and the more from the deep regard I see you have for my brother. But, lady, I cannot but feel also that, for your welfare as well as for his safety, his speedy removal from this place is absolutely necessary. You cannot become his wife; and though I doubt not that you believe you could ever remain his devoted, kind, and affectionate friend,—nay, that you could love him more deeply than any thing else on earth, without becoming criminal,—believe me, lady, that such a state is somewhat more than dangerous. It can but end in the destruction of both.”

While I spoke, through the fingers of the hand which remained firmly clasped over her eyes, the tear-drops rolled like rain; and the agony she seemed to endure was terrible. At length she rose, and still turning away her head, “Stop, sir!” she said, “stop! Your motive doubtless is good; but you take somewhat too great an advantage of my situation. Speak with your brother yourself. Try to persuade him to go with you. If he refuse I will see him, and endeavour to use such arguments as may most effectually move him. And now, sir,” she added, dashing the tears from her eyes, and turning round upon me with a glance of beautiful indignation—“and now, sir, having wiped those unworthy drops away, I will beg you to leave me. Your brother sleeps, but I can tell you, for I have watched

the night by his couch, that he has enjoyed uninterrupted slumber; and therefore, if you think fit to wake him, do. Should you find your reasoning vain, as I said before, have recourse to me, and fear not I will do my part. Though let me tell you, Captain Masterton, that had I felt sure of being able to protect him, or to ensure his life myself from the parliamentarians, no weak doubt of either myself or him would have made me yield him to a long journey, after such wounds as he has met with."

She bowed, and signed me to the door with an air of majestic command, which I felt no disposition to disobey; and retiring from the withdrawing-room, I proceeded to the apartments of my brother.

On entering the dressing-room I found Gabriel Jones, as usual, with the Bible on his knee, and apparently deeply busied in reading the Holy Scriptures; from which employment, however—as I knew that he grossly perverted, in his own foul mind, the pure words of everlasting truth that he there found written—I did not scruple to disturb him. In answer to my inquiries after my brother, he informed me that none of his wounds were at all dangerous; and that though he was very weak through loss of blood, when he had fallen asleep the night before, there was little doubt that he would wake much stronger, from the long and tranquil repose which he had enjoyed. On inquiring still further concerning the possibility of removing him, I found, to my surprise, that the valet was not at all unwilling to second my efforts in regard to the journey of his master. There was nothing, he said, to prevent his travelling. Men much worse had been carried longer journeys; and in a litter he would answer for it that all would go well.

As Frank continued to sleep, I went down to the gate, and gave orders for preparing a machine with all speed for carrying the object of our care with as little motion as possible; and on my return, I found him just awake.

Our conversation was long, and he was much soft-

ened in character by the languor of his frame ; but all I had to tell him made little impression in regard to his journey, and his determination to remain, though expressed in a weaker voice, was couched in terms as firm as ever. Lady Eleanor then became my only resource ; and though she received me on my return with the same air of cold displeasure which she had assumed before we last parted, she instantly rose to fulfil the promise she had given.

“ You will have the kindness to wait for me here, Captain Masterton,” she said. “ On my return I hope to bring you such tidings as you desire,—your brother’s servant is with him, I suppose ?”

I replied that he was ; and she left the room. For near an hour I remained in expectation of her return ; but at length I was sent for to my brother’s chamber, where I found Lady Eleanor sitting at a little distance from his bedside, and Gabriel Jones standing by. Fresh tears had evidently overflowed the lady’s eyes, and my brother’s countenance was flushed and agitated.

He did not speak himself, but left Lady Eleanor to communicate to me that he would not further oppose the measures I thought necessary for his safety. As it was improbable, however, that the parliamentary generals would immediately detach any considerable part of their forces in the direction of Penford-bourne, we determined not to set out till the cool of the evening ; and during the course of the day, both Lady Eleanor and Frank recovered greatly their composure ; although from the moment I had mentioned her husband’s name, a degree of coldness, I might say haughty reserve, had come over the lady’s manner towards me, which did not at all wear away during the day.

At the appointed hour the litter we had prepared was brought to the door, and Frank was carried down and placed safely in it. A feeling that the last words which could ever pass between my brother and the fair being in whose bosom he had inspired such deep interest, must be spoken then, made me draw a little away, and also, on some excuse, send the guard down the avenue,

as Lady Eleanor approached to bid him farewell. She had by this time gained perfect command over herself, and she spoke to him for some minutes without a tear dimming her eye, without a trace of agitation appearing on her countenance. At length seeing her raise her head, I again approached, and as I did so, Frank repeated, in a hasty voice, "Then I rely on you! You will not—surely you will not fail me!"

"By all I hold dear on earth, and beyond the earth!" she replied, in a low, thrilling tone, and drawing back, she bowed slightly to me as I came up, and ascended the steps into the house. She was very pale, but seemed perfectly composed; and she walked steadfastly onward into her dwelling, without once turning her head. I thought I heard a heavy sob as she passed the door: but if it were so, that was the only thing which marked emotions that were far more powerful, I felt sure, than those she suffered to appear.

The horses were now placed to the litter, as had been arranged; and at the end of the avenue I put myself at the head of the regiment, and we began our march. The first day's journey was a painful one: Frank never opened his lips to me, though he spoke several times to Gabriel Jones; and it seemed that he attributed to me all the necessary pain he felt at leaving a person he so dearly loved. I had made up my mind, however, to bear all that the peevishness of sickness and the anger of disappointment could produce; and I relaxed not a moment in endeavouring to sooth and console him by every means in my power. The journey he bore even better than I had expected; and when we halted, he forced himself to thank me for the pains I had bestowed upon his comfort. The night passed well, and nothing occurred to give us either disturbance or apprehension. No enemy appeared to be in the neighbourhood, and the people were in general loyal; though one saintly preacher, whom I met in the streets of the little village where we halted, called me "a rusty hinge and a creaking door."

Frank passed the night quietly; no fever resulted

from his wounds ; and in the morning he was much stronger than the day before. His mind seemed more reconciled to his situation also ; and he did not appear to view me with the same cold dissatisfaction which the whole of his conduct during the previous day had displayed. Before we began our morning's march, he spoke long with me on the events at Maidstone ; and the assurance that the circumstance of his supersedure still remained locked in my own bosom appeared to afford him infinite relief.

From this time, as we advanced on our way towards Devonshire, I was almost constantly by the side of his litter, till his strength was sufficiently recovered to permit of his mounting his horse ; and he felt deeply, I am sure, all that I did to relieve and solace him. Even after he had quitted the litter, however, as he could not bear any extraordinary fatigue, the command of the regiment remained with me for several days ; and during that time, various difficulties and obstacles obstructed our progress. An occasional rencounter with different bodies of the militia served to keep our parties in constant activity ; and in more than one large town our advance was threatened with interruption by multitudes of the inhabitants, who collected to call us " Malignant dogs, hungering after the saints, to devour them."

Our reception, indeed, was very different at the several places through which we passed. In some we were hooted, and even pelted by the mob ; and in others we were welcomed with joy, supplied with all we could want, and suffered to depart with God's benison. But on the whole, our passage through the country was more favourable than perhaps we had a right to hope for ; and in almost all cases where the magistrates or other civil authorities showed any disposition to impede our movements, I found that they were in general soon brought to reason by being informed that we were retreating quietly, for the purpose of dispersing ourselves in our own homes ; that if suffered to pass unopposed, we would injure no one ; but

that being resolute men, we would cut our way through at all risks, on the slightest show of resistance. Nor, indeed, could they have attempted to stop us with any prospect of success, for a great many circumstances combined to leave the country nearly open for our march. One large body of the parliamentary forces was still pursuing Lord Goring and the rest, in Kent. A second was directing its march towards Essex; a third, under Cromwell, was advancing to meet the Duke of Hamilton, and Sir Marmaduke Langdale, in Lancashire; and at the same time, troops were necessarily left for the defence of London, as well as for completing in Wales what Cromwell had by this time begun by the reduction of Pembroke Castle. Thus, I do not believe that in any county through which we passed five hundred men could have been collected to oppose us at less than a week's notice. Our retreat, therefore, I may almost say, was uninterrupted; and long before the knowledge of our passage had spread through the country, we had nearly reached the place to which our movements tended.

Frank had by this time recovered his strength; and with pleasure I resigned to him, on the borders of Devonshire, the command of the regiment. Gradually as his health was restored, his mind had seemed to recover its tone; but still he was silent, absent, grave. On approaching his home, all his old feelings and habits appeared to return. The same reserve, the same calm self-possession was resumed; and, though I could see a change—though I perceived and knew that the fire which had been lighted up in his heart was any thing but really extinguished, yet I do not think the most attentive observer, who had not watched him as I had watched, would have known any difference between the Cavalier who had quitted Devonshire two months before and him who now returned.

Towards me, indeed, there was a decided alteration in some respects. He was as reserved as ever; he never mentioned a thousand subjects that busily employed the memory of each, every hour of our exist-

ence ; he never told me his thoughts, his feelings, his plans for the future : but he was softer in his manner ; evinced more deference for my opinion ; and would often mingle his conversation with some kind and endearing word, that went sweetly home to my heart, and won all its best sympathies for him.

Such was the state of affairs, when a messenger whom we had despatched to Masterton House returned with a letter from my father, containing directions to disperse the regiment, and let the troopers return home to their houses with as little parade as possible. He informed my brother, to whom the letter was addressed, that he had already entered into an understanding with the parliamentary commissioners, who were at Exeter, that on the disbanding of all forces, no further notice should be taken of the part we had acted than the infliction of a small and almost nominal fine. He, at the same time, sent us letters of safe-conduct for our own security in traversing the country, and directed us to limit our escort to twenty men, as he had bound himself not to receive more into Masterton House. His word was so habitually considered law by my brother and myself, that even had not the terms he had negotiated been half so favourable, we should have submitted without hesitation ; and, accordingly, selecting the twenty men whom we thought best qualified to accompany us, we informed the rest of the troopers of what had been done, and dismissed them, well satisfied, to their homes, giving them security for the discharge of their pay, under our own hands.

We thought it best to do this at night, at a little village on the confines of Somerset and Devonshire ; and I could not help feeling a strange sensation of regret, as troop by troop of men, with whom I had taken so much pains, whose comfort and security had been for weeks and months a matter of so much interest to me, who had shared with me so many fatigues, and accompanied me through some perils, passed before my eyes for the last time. I turned away somewhat sick at heart, for it was one of those moments when a thou-

sand hopes and anticipations blasted for ever rise suddenly from the void of the irreversible past, like the mournful spectres of the loved and dead, that crowd into some dark and painful dream, and seem to presage new woes and sorrows for the time to come.

Most of the soldiers waited for nothing but leave to depart ; and before next morning we were left with but few besides the twenty whom we had selected for our escort. Those whose cooler spirits had chosen to remain we sent by different roads, and selecting for our own journey the least frequented path that we knew, we traversed our native country towards our home.

As we proceeded, the world of our early remembrances grew upon us. A total interruption of all old accustomed thoughts had taken place during our wanderings ; but now every furlong of the road had its memory ; and there was not a tree, or a rock, or a stream, or a hill, that did not recall the soft days of youth, and the things that never return. The very breeze seemed full of early days ; and cloud after cloud, as the summer air drove them across the blue heavens, looked like the phantoms of all my young dreams, hurried far across the expanse of life by the wild uncertain breath of fortune. Perhaps it might be some fitful caprice of my nature, or perhaps disappointment at the ill success of our expedition ; but there was a deep gloom came over me, to which every step seemed but to add ; and all the memorials of my early years excited only a sigh.

My brother also was grave : but by this time he had recovered fully, as I have said, his former self ; and within the last two days even I had not been able to distinguish whether the passion which had for a time so stirred his soul, was really passing away to the world of bright things forgotten, or whether it was only that he mastered its expression. If it were the latter, he enacted his part most wonderfully well ; and, as if he strove to try his own powers over himself, he more than once mentioned Penford-bourne, and Lady Eleanor Fleming, as things almost indifferent. The

first time he did so, I thought I could detect, by a quiver of the lip, that all was not quite calm within; but the second, and the third time, his countenance betrayed no emotion.

I felt discontented at his calmness. Why, I did not know. I had been the person to strive to withdraw him from temptation. I it had been who had warned him to beware of the criminal passion which he had encouraged, to beseech him to cast it off, and to tear him almost forcibly from its object. My endeavours had been successful. He had quitted the dangerous neighbourhood—he had recovered his serenity—he seemed to have thrown away, or forgotten, the feelings which had betrayed him; and yet I was not contented. No! not though his demeanour towards myself was gentler, kinder, more affectionate.

I could not account for my own sensations; and I would not, or I dared not, look closely into my own heart; but one of those trifles, which are in some sort the lightning-flashes of our dark nature, showing us in one moment of bright light all the dim objects that fill, unseen, the world of the human breast, was destined soon to blaze it all upon my sight.

My father met us, on horseback, at the gates of the park, near a mile from the house, and received us with a tenderness and affection which he had never displayed before. He gazed anxiously on my brother's worn and thoughtful countenance; remarked the two deep gashes on my brow and cheek; and pressing us alternately to his bosom, gave free course to a father's feelings for the first time for twenty years. We turned to the house on foot, followed by our little escort. I was absent and agitated, and my father noticed it; but added that it was not extraordinary that I should be so, on returning to my early home, after passing through scenes of such danger and anxiety.

As we came near the house, the sound of trampling horses and many voices gave notice of our approach; and the whole household issued forth to welcome us back. Emily Langleigh, lovelier than ever, was first

on the terrace to greet us. Her eye turned towards me; but Frank stepped forward to receive the welcome of his promised bride, and pressed his lips upon her cheek.

Good God! what was it that I felt! It passed through my heart and my brain like lightning! It was madness! madness itself! but it mastered all other feelings. Common sense, reflection, every thing was at an end; and dashing past every one, I entered the house, rushed up stairs to my own bedchamber, locked the door with violent haste, and cast myself upon my bed in prostrate misery.

I have passed through a long life; I have known many sorrows and many cares; but I never felt, or saw, or dreamed of any thing that equalled the agony of that moment.

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT we, creatures of dust and ashes, should dream of happiness,—should hope for enjoyment! 'Tis a madness!—'tis a folly! The very perfections of our corporeal frame render us peculiarly susceptible to bodily pain; and the refined essence of our other being, which commands, but cannot govern, our clay, raises us above all the insects of the earth, chiefly by the fearful supremacy of mental agony—and yet the mind may do much, if properly exerted. It cannot remove the evil, but it can teach us to bear it: it cannot assuage the pang, but it can enable us to suppress its expression. If it be the noblest effort of the reflecting soul to conquer the passions of the animal, and even the finer yearnings of the heart, to compel ourselves to do our duty in despite of opposing circumstances and our own desires, surely the triumph can never be complete when the victor over himself writhes under his own conquest.

Such were the reflections that grew out of my grief, after an hour's indulgence had exhausted its first violence; and the resolutions which I took at that moment, and which I adhered to long, with unshaken perseverance, were such as those reflections might naturally inspire: to conquer and to command myself; to see my hopes torn from me—not without a pang, but without a murmur; and by neither word nor action to betray to any one the agony of spirit under which I laboured.

I had at length learned what were my real feelings towards Emily Langleigh. I had at length discovered how—and how deeply I loved her. But while I made the discovery, I felt the double pang of knowing that she could never be mine; and that she was destined to wed a man who could not value her as she ought to be valued—who could not feel towards her the only affection that ought to make woman happy. Frank could not but admire the young and blossoming charms of her person; he could not but esteem the sweet and gentle nature of her heart; he could not but respect the fine and powerful qualities of her mind; but he could not love her as I could love—and I felt that nothing less ought to be her lot. Had I believed that the same intense and ardent feelings could exist within his bosom which existed within mine, I could have yielded her—not without a sigh—but with less pain. But to dream of her wedding a man who loved another was misery indeed; and yet that man was my brother, and I was bound to silence. His passion for Lady Eleanor, however open and undisguised it had been to me, was in the guardianship of my honour, and my lips were sealed by every duty; I resolved therefore to suffer.

It were almost useless to inquire how or why I had remained so blind to what was passing in my own bosom in regard to that dear, beautiful girl, during all the time of our early familiarity, and during all the efforts I had made to detach my brother from another pursuit. I had been taught from our first acquaintance to consider her as destined to him: nor had I well

known what love is. In my endeavours, too, to win my brother from his passion for another woman, my mind had been too much engaged in the cause of his honour and his happiness to remember myself, or to connect what I was then doing, except very remotely, with the idea of Emily Langleigh. I did not forget, indeed, that at some distant period she was to be his wife; but it was a contemplation far off and indistinct; something that remained upon my mind more as a matter of habit than of active memory or thought. But in those scenes at Penford-bourne I had learned to know what love really is. I had seen it in its most fiery and most overpowering form; and it wanted but an impulse to make me apply the key which I had there acquired, to read the passion in my own heart. I had never seen Frank kiss the cheek of Emily Langleigh in my life before; and now, when he did so at his return, it passed like fire along my veins, and the secret of my own feelings was spoken to me at once.

And now, too, I felt that I had to resign it all; for to me the future communion with that dear and beloved being must be ever mingled with bitterness: the *spes animi credula mutui* must be at an end; and, like the awful warning written above the Persian's throne, to keep in his mind that death was the end of all his glory, the words *she can never be mine* were destined to sadden each moment that I passed beside her. The long, dreamy conversations,—the wild enthusiastic rambles,—the pauses on the hill to mark the beauty of the scene, and to pour the rapturous overflowings of our young feelings into each other's hearts,—or the morning spent by the sea-side, enjoying the repose of the summer air, and the murmur of the soft unwinded waves, and creating for ourselves an atmosphere of visionary happiness, must now, if ever indulged in, be, on my part, full of the miserable knowledge that the sweet companion who gave sunshine to the world of my existence could never, never be mine!—that she was destined to be the bride of another:—that the common competition which was allowed to the meanest

hind was denied to me ;—that I must yield her without striving, and lose her without hope.

Oh ! how truly yet in some instances, even in ordinary life, does the tree of the knowledge of good and evil betoken the loss of happiness. Had I never known that I loved her—had that conviction never flashed across my mind, I might still have been happy for long—I might still have enjoyed to the full all the pleasures that could honourably have been mine—and only learned to be wretched at last. But now I felt that continual sorrow must follow my steps, and that a drop of poison was mingled for me with the cup of life, pervading it all from the brim to the very dregs.

My determination, however, was to drink it off without a shudder ; and when that determination was once formed, I paused but a few minutes to collect my thoughts, and prepare for the task. Aware of the powerful nature of example, but wanting knowledge of the world to yield me those tangible and living types which might have afforded me a better strength than my own, I strove to place before my eyes some model for imitation from what I had read. I called up to my mind the ancient philosophers of Greece ; I thought of Socrates and his bowl of hemlock ; I pondered a moment on the Stoic, and a moment on the Platonic philosophy ; and out of both I worked up a sort of system for my future conduct. There was in it a degree both of the puerility of a schoolboy and the visionary strength of an enthusiast ; but yet, as I paused and pondered upon the firm and unshrinking nature of the great of other days, I found a new vigour spring up in my heart—a power of commanding my own emotions, which I had sadly wanted before. I remained a few moments longer to think calmly over my fate, and to let my resolution fix itself by the contemplation of the greatest evils that could ultimately befall me ; and then, unlocking my door, I went down to the common apartment where the whole family usually met. They were now all assembled there ; and when I came in, all their eyes turned upon me.

"I can easily understand, my dear Harry," said my father kindly, "that your return to your home and your native place, after so many scenes of danger and difficulty, must agitate you greatly; but, really, you ought not to give way to such sudden bursts of feeling. Here is the Lady Emily has been not a little anxious for you. You should learn to command yourself."

"I have been tutoring myself to do so, my lord," I replied; and advanced towards Emily, to take the hand she held out towards me. The eye of my brother Frank rested on me as I did so, with a calm, satisfied, but peculiar expression, which made me almost fancy that he saw into my bosom. From my manner, however, I do not think he could detect any thing; for I strove strongly—and, I think, successfully—to cover the feelings of which I had become so lately aware, under precisely the same manner which had before concealed them from everybody, while they had been hidden from myself. Nevertheless, there was something of agitation in Emily herself, which I dared not scrutinize, for fear of shaking all the resolution I had built up. I saw her colour come and go; I saw her eye look brightly up, and then fall; and, after a few words of kindly greeting, I turned away.

It was a relief to me when my father began to speak of the various incidents of our short campaign, and to ask, in his brief, generalizing manner, the particulars of those events which tended to the greatest political results. Not so, however, to my brother, who with some precipitation answered Lord Masterton's first inquiries, by telling him that he had been wounded in such a manner, and at such a period, as to be obliged to leave me to command the regiment during the more important events of the enterprise. He reddened while he spoke; but this piece of insincerity passed current; and my father, after asking the nature of his wounds, without inquiring where or how they had been received, proceeded to speak with me upon the conduct of the regiment in battle, and all the circumstances in which I had been placed.

I told my tale as well as I could; and related the incidents of the rising in Kent, more as a youth recounting his first exploits than either officer or politician. My own feelings I dwelt upon, and all the objects as they had struck me, during the new scenes through which I had passed; but I am afraid I left my father the trouble of drawing all his own conclusions in regard to the consequences of the events which I narrated. There was one person, however, whom my history seemed to interest deeply, for, as I spoke, Emily drew nearer and nearer; and though she kept her eyes upon her embroidery, I could see that she was listening to every word, by the varying colour in her soft cheek, which changed from pale to red and then to pale again, like a light cloud as it comes near and passes by the evening sun. My father was particularly struck with my account of little Ball-o'-fire, and ordered him to be brought in, that he might see him. While the servant charged to fetch him was gone to the stable, where the boy had already quartered himself, my brother left the room; and fortunate it was that he did so. The servant was absent only a few minutes, during which time Lord Masterton drew from me all the little I knew concerning the state of parties, and the political movements in the counties near the metropolis; and, at the end of that period, the soldier's child was brought in, clothed nearly as I had first seen him; for I had not yet had time to make any great addition to his very scanty wardrobe.

After asking several questions, to which the boy replied with the keen brevity which he had learned in scenes of haste and danger, and with a degree of irreverent boldness, to which Lord Masterton was not very much accustomed, my father demanded, "Well, little Ball-o'-fire, are you of gentle birth?"

"As gentle as the king," replied the boy; "and as hungry as the Prince of Wales."

"That may well be hungry enough, poor boy," replied my father. "But we must feed you at all events,

and clothe you too, I think. Would you like to be page to my eldest son, little Ball-o'-fire?"

"I would rather be lackey to his younger brother," replied the boy, boldly; and Emily, looking up, fixed her eyes upon him, with a surprised and inquiring glance, while my father demanded,

"Why so, my lad?"

What the boy might have answered I do not know; but he was the most rapid catcher of a glance I ever beheld; and, after turning his eye for a single instant to my face, which was frowning pretty severely I own, he replied,

"Because I know Captain Harry best; and because I saw him send his sword through the black-hearted Roundhead that shot my father at Bolton le Moors."

Something in the boy's answer made Emily's eyes fill with tears; and my father seemed struck with it also.

"Ha! those are good reasons, in truth," replied he; "and he shall make his page of thee till better times. Send for the village tailor, Harry, and get rid of those rags of his, that he may not shame thy service."

"Those rags have not shamed the service of the king," replied the boy quickly, with a sharp and perhaps indignant tone. "Yet nevertheless," he added, a moment after, "they are old friends that I am not loath to part with, for they are every hour threatening to deny me their good company the next."

As my father was not in general fond of such free-spoken companions, I took little Ball-o'-fire out of the room; and, after giving him strict directions in regard to his behaviour towards both my brother and Lord Masterton, I delivered him over into the hands of one of the servants, who, aided and abetted by the tailor of the neighbouring village, in a few days produced him in a page's dress, looking as handsome a boy as ever I beheld. There was an air of bold freedom and of dauntless courage in his whole demeanour, that might have become a prince; and though he strictly followed my commands to show reverence and respect to both

my father and brother, he still retained the air of easy independence that had grown up with him from his earliest years. His activity of body and mind was astonishing. He slept little, and that at any accidental hour that he found most convenient; but I never knew him absent when I wanted him, inattentive to my commands, forgetful of what he heard, or incompetent to execute any thing that was asked of him. Of course I need not say that I did not demand any thing very unreasonable, though sometimes, to try all the manifold strange accomplishments which he had acquired in his wandering existence, I would occasionally require him to perform offices very different from those with which he might have been expected to be familiar, and yet I never found any that his skill and ingenuity did not contrive to accomplish. On all occasions he showed himself gay, and shrewd, and good-humoured, but somewhat hasty in temper; and I would not have suffered him to wear a dagger, which he always did, had I not been aware that he had been accustomed to the possession of such an implement from his youth.

The quick movements and the rapidity of speech and manner of the soldier's child seemed, in some degree, to enliven the dull routine of our dwelling; but in other respects every thing soon appeared to sink back to the state in which it was before our unsuccessful expedition; although several circumstances contributed to render the house more gloomy than formerly. My own feelings had changed me from a gay and lively youth to a grave and rather churlish young man. My brother, too, was more by himself than ever, and my father full as much so; while every day some of the widows, or orphans, or parents of the men who had fallen beside us in battle would come up to the house, either for tidings of their relative's fate, or some account of his death, or some consolation under their afflictions. It was in general Master Harry that was asked for on these sad occasions; and such interviews did not tend to remove the gloom that had fallen over me.

Emily Langleigh, however, was all that was kind

and gentle. It formed no part of my plan to shun her society, or to endeavour to forget my love by flying from its object. I strove so to conduct myself that, towards her, the slightest shade of difference should not be apparent; but she saw that I was sad; and with but too dangerous kindness she endeavoured to win me from myself by every endearing attention. We were almost always together. Frank was seldom if ever near; and, indeed, when he by chance met us walking or riding, he seemed purposely to avoid joining us, so that my days passed in that commune which did far more to nourish my affection than all its hopelessness could do to diminish it.

Thus passed more than two months, during which time my brother's conduct remained unaltered; reserved, silent, constantly alone, riding, shooting, walking by himself, he seemed to hold little communication with any one but his servant Gabriel Jones. Nevertheless, if chance ever threw us together for any length of time, I found that he was gentler and kinder in his mood towards me than formerly; and I could not but remark that often he fixed his eyes upon me, as if there was something in his bosom that he wished to speak. Once, and only once, he spoke to me of Emily Langleigh, in terms of such high and ardent praise that, feeling I could hear no more, I left the room. He followed me to the door, and I heard his voice pronounce my name, as I was proceeding along the passage; but I knew that the command over myself which I had striven so powerfully and so painfully to obtain was, for the time at least, lost: and I affected not to hear his call. I have regretted through the long course of many years that I did not pause at that moment, and listen to what he was about to say. It was but a trifle it is true, but trifles are the pivots on which turn all the vast wheels of that complicated machine, society; and he who has no trifles to regret will probably find, on memory, few great errors for which to compound with remorse.

With that single exception, nothing occurred during

those two months to recall to my mind the fearful memory that Emily was to be his ; and I began to grow accustomed to my fate.

At length, one day, as I returned from sailing in my boat on the bay, I met Frank suddenly in the wood. He caught my hand the moment we met, and fixing his dark eyes upon me with a look that seemed destined to read my very soul, he said, "Harry, my father has just announced to me that this day month—"

Before he ended the sentence I knew what was to come. His gaze was upon me—his suspicions I saw were excited. But I nerved myself with all my strength, and by the time he had concluded—"that this day month I am to receive the hand of Emily Langleigh," I had obtained the power to reply calmly, with the single word, "Well!"

He held my hand a moment longer in his ; and his eye ran over every line in my face, till I could feel the blood beginning to rise into it, in spite of all my efforts. But at that instant he loosened his hold, and, echoing my word "Well!" turned into the wood and disappeared. He said not a word—he made not a comment—but he echoed that word *Well*, in a tone in which astonishment, and indignation, and grief had all their share.

My calmness was but of a moment. Nor could I have commanded that moment had I not been raising up and combating the same evil spirits in my solitary sail across the bay, that my brother's communication was calculated to call forth again. I had thought of Emily Langleigh as his bride—of my own dear, beautiful Emily as the wife of my brother ; and though not a word had reached my ear to indicate that the time at which that sacrifice was to be made was now approaching, a strange, indistinct, painful apprehension that such was the case had weighed upon my mind during the whole day. While it was but apprehension, however, I had dared to meet and to steel myself against the worst. But, oh ! what pure unmingled agony of spirit were my communings with myself after the forebodings were confirmed—when I found that it was decided—

that the day was named to put the inevitable barrier of fate between me and Emily for ever!

I sought out the deepest part of the wood—I cast myself down in despair—I writhed amid the dewy grass like a crushed worm, for nearly two long hours, and was only roused at length from the tumultuous dream of my agony by the approach of a footstep. I started up, but not before the quick eye of my new page had fallen upon me.

“Well, boy!” I exclaimed, in somewhat of a hasty tone, “what brings you now?”

“Nothing, but to tell the news,” replied the page.

“Tell it to some one else, then,” I said; “I know it well already.”

“She is a gallant sloop,” replied the boy, without appearing to take any note of the agitation which I felt must have been evident to the blindest eyes; “she is a gallant sloop, and half her cargo is by this time stowed among the rocks.

“What do you mean, wild lad?” I asked. “What sloop are you speaking of?”

“The smuggling French sloop that lies so well at anchor in the cove,” replied the page; then suddenly changing his tone, and coming nearer me, he said, “how well she would carry us all to France!”

“Carry us! Whom do you mean?” I asked. “You are mad, boy!”

“Not so mad as many!” he answered: “I mean you and me, and one person more;” and he gazed up in my face with a glance which, translated by the feelings that were then newly wakened in my bosom, received but one interpretation.

He touched upon a dangerous subject; and, without another word, either of the questions which my heart prompted me to put, or of the rebuke that his boldness well merited, I turned and walked towards the house. A child, a very child had seen into my heart. Could I then dream that what I felt had escaped the keen eyes of my brother? The boy followed me as I walked on; but my own consciousness made a coward

of me; and without daring to question him further, I bade him begone and play.

I shall never forget the meeting of our family at supper that night. What I said I hardly know—what I felt was torture. Emily was as pale as death. In one single day the bright and beautiful colour of her cheek had faded entirely away; and when she smiled, or rather strove to smile, it was like one of those faint and fitful beams that sometimes struggle through a stormy day, tipping for a moment some distant cloud; but lost again in gloom, long ere it reaches the earth. Frank was as silent as the tomb; and our meeting was rather like that of a family after the recent loss of one of its members, than on any more joyful occasion. A stranger coming among us then might well have looked round to see if he could behold some vacant seat—some of those new dark blanks in the domestic circle which—when death has lately been busy in a house, and time has not yet robbed memory of her sting—call up so many thoughts at every time of meeting.

My father saw that embarrassment at least hung over us all; and before he retired for the night, he told Emily that he had sent an invitation to her father's first cousin, the Lady Margaret Langleigh, to spend the ensuing month at Masterton House. The motive and the proposal were kind and judicious. Rightly judging that under such circumstances the presence and support of an elder person of her-own sex would be of the greatest comfort to Emily, he had fixed upon one whom none of the family had ever seen, indeed, but of whom every report was favourable.

Her husband had fallen in the civil war; his estates had been sequestered. She herself had once suffered severe imprisonment; but fame said that she had borne all with exemplary patience, fortitude, and cheerfulness; and lived in penury with the same unchangeable serenity which she had displayed in her highest fortune. To Emily's mother she had been a dear and valued friend; and in Emily herself she had ever taken a profound and unvarying interest. I found afterward that,

in prosperity or adversity alike, she had never ceased to demand and receive news of her young cousin ; and though at that time I had hardly ever heard of her before, she had never ceased since the death of Lord Langleigh to correspond with my father. Such a person was well calculated to give confidence, hope, and support to us all ; and, in truth, we all seemed to need it ; but had she been the exact reverse of what she was, none of Lord Masterton's family would have presumed to differ from his opinion or murmur at his will.

For the next ten nights it seemed as if the balmy angel of sleep had forgotten me for ever. During the day a thousand eyes were upon me ; but that part of existence generally devoted to sleep was my own, unwatched, unrestrained ; and I lay and deluged my pillow with tears—bitter, weak, infant-like tears. But after acting all day, with the iron rigidity of a stoic, the part of calm contentment while my heart was on fire, it was a relief at night to be a very child, and to humour my grief to the overflowing. Still the want of rest, and the continual agonizing struggle in my bosom, had nearly, I believe, upset my reason. I formed, before I could conquer my own thoughts, a thousand wild schemes for carrying off Emily Langleigh. The words which the boy had casually spoken wandered continually through my mind ; and I more than once went down to the smuggling vessel, spoke with the skipper, and ascertained that a small sum of money would bribe him to more deeds than I should be ever tempted to require. Let me not be misunderstood. I never in my waking consciousness formed or suffered such a thought. I banished them whenever I discovered such imaginations rising up in my brain. But I felt like him of old—as if I had two spirits ; and while the better angel slept, the more watchful demon would lure me on with wild visions, towards deeds that the nobler soul condemned as soon as any thing called it from its momentary slumber.

And what made me dream that Emily would consent to fly with me ? it may be asked. I do not well

know ; and yet it was a dream that haunted me. Her fading cheek, her dimmed eye, which spoke of sleepless nights too like my own, a sort of shivering from the attentions which my brother now began to pay, even an anxious and trembling agitation, when I was with her alone—all made me feel that her heart was not in that which was going forward, and dream that perhaps her wishes were not unallied to mine. And yet to think so only added torture to what I felt already. It was madness—it drove me to madness—and one day, when the conviction had come more strongly upon me than ever, in a fit of wild despair I ran hastily down the narrow and labyrinth-like path that led to the cove where the smuggler lay ; and in a few minutes I had hired the sloop to be at my command for the next thirty days.

It wanted now five days of that appointed for my brother's marriage ; and with a sort of gloomy determination in every step, which bordered on insanity, I trod back my way towards the house, murmuring to myself broken fragments of what I purposed to say to Emily, in communication of my love and my design. When I entered the withdrawing-room, however, I found her seated beside an old but still beautiful woman, though her beauty was like that of a ruin, something lovely falling fast to decay. There were the lines of exquisite features ; the broad high forehead, the straight fine nose, the small mouth, the rounded chin, the long blue eye ; and even the fine complexion remained. But the snowy hair braided across the brow, beneath the close wimple, and the deep marks which time and care can only furrow, spoke of both age and sorrow.

Emily had been in tears ; whether at the tale Lady Margaret—for it was she—was telling, or at her own feelings, I do not know ; but after her introduction to myself, the lady went on, and spoke of woes so endured, temptation so resisted, and agonies so subdued, by the one chastening principle of true piety, that I felt ashamed of my own madness, and began to look to some higher source than that from which I had

hitherto endeavoured to draw false strength to master the expression of my feelings.

She spoke in a gentle and a soothing tone of herself and her sorrows—in a manner which gave consolation without seeming to console; and with such topics she mingled many a truth gathered by long experience in the world, which told the better as they bore evident the stamp of the place whence they came. "Religion," she ended by saying, "was the only thing she had found on earth, which, like the bee, drew from the bitter and the sweet the same honeyed juice; and though many ways had been devised for man to govern his nature, she had seen but that one principle which ever could raise him above it."

Emily listened, and then lifted her eyes to mine with a look that seemed almost of entreaty. I had listened too; and turning to my own chamber, I knelt and prayed; and cast from me at once the unworthy designs I had entertained. I was not happier, it is true, but I was better; and I felt that I had acquired a new principle of endurance.

Still, as the ship was hired, I resolved to detain it there, to see Emily's hand placed in that of her husband; and then, without a moment's delay amid scenes that I dared not trust my mind to dwell on, to seek in secret some other land, and give myself to the wide current of accident. It was a wild and rash purpose, it is true; but those were days in which every kind of mad scheme was so familiar to the mind that it was nothing extraordinary.

The skipper then remained in the cove; his merchandise was already dispersed over the country; and the magistrates had too much occupation, between fanatical dreams and political disturbances, to notice with energy his illicit traffic. My father, indeed, declared that after his son's marriage, he would take measures for putting a stop to the system of forbidden commerce which had established itself all along the coast during the civil war; but long before he did so, I thought I should be many far leagues away from my

once-loved native land ; and, in the mean time, he was too full of his own thoughts to give much attention to the transactions that were passing around him. He seemed not to perceive the haggard wretchedness which my countenance must have spoken too plainly. He saw not those signs on the cheek and the eye of Emily Langleigh, that told of doubt, and fear, and repugnance towards the union that was about to take place. He remarked not even in my brother a sort of stern but restless anxiety, which showed that his heart was not at ease.

Nevertheless, Frank played the part of an attentive suiter in some degree. He was more with Emily than he had hitherto been ; he spoke to her, I believe, tenderly and kindly ; though I took good care seldom to be a witness to their conversations ; he kept his man, Gabriel Jones, continually on the road between our dwelling and Exeter, bringing rarities and ornaments for the person of his bride ; and by a thousand little acts of the same kind, he strove to cover over a degree of cold abstraction which would too often fall upon him.

All this satisfied my father in regard to him ; and doubtless, in the case of Emily, Lord Masterton attributed to native modesty and girlish fears all those signs of reluctance which had their origin in still more powerful feelings. From me, however, none of those signs were hidden ; and if I did not construe them aright, it was not for want of seeking their interpretation. All my perceptions, all my thoughts, were confined to what was passing between those two. Every thing else had become to me merely mechanical. I may say that I saw nothing, that I felt nothing but what they did and said ; and all those rambling thoughts and fancies which in other days used to go forth from my mind to wander truant-like about the wide universe unguided, unrestrained, now seemed totally annihilated. The only way in which imagination exercised her powers was in giving a thousand varied constructions to every look and word of my brother and Emily Langleigh.

Still my father saw not, or seemed not to see, that I was altogether changed. The only notice he ever took of the gloom that hung over me was when, two days before my brother's marriage-day, he gave into my own hands the disposal of the estates which had descended to me from my mother, together with a sum of money which had been accumulated during the last year and a half, but had not been invested as usual in land.

"I hope, Harry," he said, "that you have not supposed I was going to make over to your brother a large portion of my property, without assigning to you sufficient income to hold your rank in society. Your mother's fortune will be enough for the present; and your late conduct has shown, that though not yet of age by law, you are quite competent by reason and intellect to manage your own estates. I have only to hope," he proceeded somewhat gravely, "that we shall see you soon resume the cheerfulness which has lately left you."

I was about to reply; but I felt that if I did, I should say dangerous words that could never be recalled; and merely thanking him for the trust he had in my judgment, I left him without explanation of my feelings or insight into my heart. I avoided as far as I could all the miserable preparations which were made to give splendour to a ceremony that was to doom me to wretchedness for ever, by seeking almost solely the conversation of Lady Margaret Langleigh; and in doing so, I won the regard of one who was destined to be deeply serviceable to me in after-life.

Thus passed two more days of misery; but the third I must speak of by itself.

CHAPTER XV.

It dawned at last—that day of exquisite wretchedness which centuries of either joy or sorrow could never wear away from my remembrance, if Time were to fly over my head for ever, with all the blessings and the curses that drop continually from his shadowy wings. It dawned at last; and I quitted my bed, how changed from what I had been, when I used to welcome the bright morning light streaming unclouded into my chamber, as the harbinger of a day of joy to the eager and hopeful mind of unblighted youth. It is an often-used figure of speech to say, I rose like a criminal to execution; but in my case it was so indeed. I rose to a day on which I was to die to hope and happiness for ever; and I prepared to meet my fate, with the same calm, steadfast determination with which a brave man encounters death itself. Like many I have heard of, who, when going to the scaffold, have dressed themselves with painful attention, I trimmed my new-grown beard with care; I spread my long hair down my shoulders; I chose the gayest and most splendid colours from my wardrobe; and placed the highest plume I could find in my hat.

My page stood beside my dressing-table; but the boy was sad and gloomy; and of all the news with which he usually strove to divert me in the morning, he had only to tell me that “holy Gabriel,” as he had christened my brother’s man, “had brought his master a letter from Exeter, which had made him right glad and happy.” I was thinking of something else; and I took no notice of what he said, when, a moment after, my brother entered with some degree of eagerness in his countenance. “Send away the boy, Harry!” he

said ; " I want to speak with you." I desired the boy to go ; but, at that moment, my father entered also.

" I am glad to see you dressed, Harry," he exclaimed. " Hasten down with all speed to receive Sir Charles Mostyn, who is now dismounting in the court. Keep him, and whatever guests may arrive besides, in conversation till I come. Fy, Frank ! fy ! not prepared on your wedding-day ! Quick, quick, and dress yourself !"

Frank bit his lip till I thought the blood would have started forth ; and I was unfortunately obliged to descend to receive the few guests who had been invited on the occasion. How I fulfilled the task Heaven knows ; but it certainly was as bitter a one as ever was imposed on man. Several of those who came remarked how deadly pale I looked ; and, attributing the fact to the wounds I had received, asked kindly after my health ; but all and each tortured me with congratulations on my brother's wedding, and praised the bride to one who too deeply felt already how beautiful and excellent she was. One had seen her here, and another there. One lauded her for this, and another admired her for that ; but the story still ended with what a handsome couple she and Frank would make ; and none seemed to perceive that the rack and the thumb-screw would be nothing to that which they were inflicting upon me.

At length—as the ceremony was to be performed in the private chapel attached to the mansion—arrived the clergyman of the parish. He had been our tutor in our earlier years ; and soon after Frank came down, they spoke together in a whisper for two or three minutes. The worthy divine looked up in his face with evident marks of surprise, as I heard him reply to something which the other had said, " Certainly ! certainly ! as long as possible ! but on what excuse ?"

" You shall have one," replied my brother ; and, as I passed on to another part of the room as quickly as possible, I heard no more.

My father appeared the moment after, and unbend-

ing in some degree from his usual stately coldness, he now welcomed one, and now addressed another, with a few graceful but commonplace words of courtesy, and a smile, which perhaps was little less so. "I would have been with you earlier, gentlemen," he said; "but of three swords which I hung by my side successively, I found two rusted to their sheaths. In truth it is little likely," he added, laughing, "that I should have to draw a blade again in this life, but however I did not choose to come to my son's wedding with a rusty sword by my side."

"It is strange—it is mighty strange," said an old cavalier, with an ominous shake of the head; "I fear it augurs badly for the king, my lord. It is mighty strange—"

"And still stranger," said my father, "your spoiled dog Rupert, Harry, came fawning on me 'at my chamber-door, as I opened it; and in truth would scarcely let me pass. He held me by the glove so long, that unwilling to strike the beast on such a morning, I let him keep it."

"Strange, indeed!" replied the old cavalier again; and though the conversation turned the moment after into another course, I could see him standing by himself in the window meditating over what had passed, and marking the minutes by the same foreboding shake of the head.

I took little notice of any thing, however. The hour appointed for the ceremony speedily approached, and every moment came with gathered agony upon my heart; at length one of the doors opened, and the whisper of "The bride! the bride!" ran through the guests. I just caught a glimpse of Emily as she entered the room, accompanied by a group of ladies who had collected in her chamber. She was still as beautiful as light; but all the decorations of her bridal array could not conceal that she was as pale as ashes; and it was evident that if she had not leaned upon the arm of another, she must have fallen, so weak and tottering

were her steps. She raised her eyes for a moment, and a quick sharp blush rushed over her face, while, as if by instinct, her glance first met mine amid all those that surrounded her. I could bear the throbbing of my heart no longer; and turning away sick, sick as death, I walked on into the narrow passage that led towards the chapel. It was a sort of corridor, that went on for some way, with windows on one side, but no door in its whole length till it came to a private one communicating with my father's bedchamber. Beyond that again it opened into a little vestibule, from whence a broad flight of steps descended to the western door of the chapel, which had besides two other entrances to the north and south, and a small door under those very stairs communicating with the lower part of the house.

I paused near the door of my father's chamber, and strove successfully to call up new courage, to go on through the bitter day as I had determined. I know not well how, but it seemed as if the very intensity of the agony I suffered gave me new powers of endurance to bear it all to the very close. I felt that it could not last long—that the moment for which I had been summoning all my fortitude had now arrived; and a few moments' thought restored me to calmness—though it was the calmness of despair. After pausing a minute by the door, I heard voices within, although I had left my father with the rest in the withdrawing-room; but concluding the speakers to be servants, when I found the bridal party were approaching towards the chapel, I endeavoured to open the door, in order to let the first persons go by, and then join those that followed. The key, however, had been turned on the other side; the lock resisted my efforts, and I was obliged to pass my father, as he led on poor Emily, who could not indeed have followed his steps had not Lady Margaret held her other arm. She did not raise her eyes, but whether she was conscious of my presence or not, I could see her tremble like the aspen as she came near the place where I stood. In scarcely a better frame myself, I joined those that followed, and we entered

the chapel; but just as Emily set her foot upon the altar steps, I beheld a sort of wavering sinking of her whole figure, and the next moment she fell back fainting into my father's arms. She soon recovered, and opening her eyes, looked round her with a glance, in which, if ever I beheld despair, it was there.

At that moment, however, Frank, in a low and hurried voice, proposed that, as she seemed so ill, the ceremony should be postponed for a short time.

"No, no!" replied my father, "she is better now! Are you not, my child? She will not be well till the ceremony is over."

His word was law, and the whole party were now arranged round the altar; but the book of prayer was not to be found. It was sought for through the chapel in vain; but after a time, another was procured, and the service was begun. The clergyman read slowly; and he marked every word of the service with a painful distinctness, as if he purposely sought to wring my heart. If I might judge, too, from the countenance of my brother, his feelings during those solemn sentences were by no means sweet; for every other minute his eyes wandered fearfully round the building, as if his mind were anywhere but in the vows he was about to take. At length, after having read and paused upon every word of the preceding exhortations with a solemnity and a slowness which seemed to me at least unnecessary, the clergyman proceeded to ask that question, the reply to which seals the most solemn contract which can bind human beings together; but at that moment some steps were heard running down the stairs by which we had entered. My brother paused, and my little page—for it was he that came in so unceremoniously—whispered to me something about "armed men."

My father heard both the irreverent step with which the boy entered the chapel, and the half-whisper in which he addressed me; and turning round, he looked angrily towards me, as if to command silence; but my brother, without replying to the question of the clergy-

man, anxiously pointed to the boy, exclaiming, "What does he say? what does he say? Speak, boy! What news bring you? What were you saying?"

"I say," replied the boy boldly, "that the corridor is full of armed men, and they are round the chapel too! There! there! Don't you see their steel caps above the window-sills? Look! here they come!"

Almost every one started at such tidings, and instinctively turned their eyes towards the casements and doors of the chapel; though one or two of the younger cavaliers present recovered themselves quickly, and assuming an air of unconcern, hummed a few notes of some blustering air, as the readiest way of covering the temporary surprise into which they had been thrown, and which they considered all unworthy of their warlike nature. The old gentleman alone who had seemed to draw such evil auguries from my father's anecdotes of the rusty sword, now appeared perfectly prepared for whatever might occur; and, drawing on his right-hand glove, he hitched his belt a little forward from the left side, so as to bring his hilt round towards his grasp, almost at the first words the page uttered.

As the boy ended, the southern door of the chapel burst open; and Habaccuc Grimstone, the Exeter magistrate, accompanied by an officer apparently of some rank, and followed by about twenty musketeers, made his appearance. The clergyman shut the book, and an expression of surprise, but certainly not of displeasure, came over the countenance of my brother. Emily clasped her hands, and turned towards me; and in a moment all was confusion. The parliamentary officer advanced straight towards us; and, to my astonishment, I beheld, as he came nearer, the countenance of Walter Dixon.

"Major-general Dixon," cried the Exeter magistrate, who hung a little behind, with the air of a bully at a bear-baiting cheering on his dog, and quite ready to stave and tail, as it is called, but not at all willing to come within the grasp of master Bruin himself, "I charge you execute your duty towards these prelati-

malignants, who cast from them the bread of life, and like dogs return to their vomit. On! godly Jacob Wilson, and saintly Flee-from-the-wrath-to-come Bilkins! On! and second your commander!"

Walter Dixon advanced till he was within about two steps of the altar; and then, unrolling a paper he held in his hand, he read, "Master Francis Masterton, commonly called Colonel Masterton, a malignant lately in arms in the county of Kent!"

As he spoke, the two first soldiers who had followed him laid hands upon my brother, with a degree of violence sufficient—although he offered not the slightest resistance—to tear open his vest; and I saw resting on his bosom the picture of a woman—it was not that of Emily Langleigh.

All this had passed in a moment—almost before any one was aware. My brother, as I have said, made not the slightest opposition to the arrest, nor appeared in any degree to resent the rough treatment of those who seized him. Such things indeed were common in those days, and Walter Dixon proceeded, as a matter of course, after his fellows had secured the first upon his list, to read the names of those next to be taken; but my father now drew his sword, and the blades of all the gentlemen present sprang from their sheaths.

"What is the meaning of all this?" exclaimed Lord Masterton. "Gentlemen, this must be resisted! I am superior to any magistrate that I see present; and I will not have my hearth invaded by every Jack who chooses to cant at Exeter. Ring the bell, boy; and we shall soon have bills and blades enough to show these gentlemen another tale."

In the same instant the terrified women were hurried behind us, and little Ball-o'-fire, catching the bell rope, rang out such a peal that hill and dale echoed it for miles around; while facing the door with our swords in our hands, we opposed ten gentlemen, with four or five servants, to the musketeers who were crowding in by the way which had first given them admittance.

"Advance the file above, Matthew Hutchinson!"

shouted Walter Dixon; "down with your muskets!" and in a moment the top of the staircase, at the other end of the chapel, was crowded with musketeers, while at their head appeared Gabriel Jones, or rather Hutchinson, as he was now called; and at the first word of their commander, their arms, with the matches lighted, were brought to bear upon our little group below.

"Lord Masterton, it is in vain to resist!" exclaimed General Dixon. "I have orders, here in my hand, from the council of state, whose authority you dare not deny, to arrest every member of the present party, I believe, except some of the lackeys. Will you surrender?"

My father paused, and turned his eye from the formidable array of muskets that in some degree surrounded us, to the group of trembling women behind him; but his suspense was soon brought to an end by the old cavalier I have before mentioned, towards whose bosom one of the soldiers had advanced, somewhat too near, the muzzle of his piece.

"Surrender!" exclaimed the old man; "never, ye cuckoldy scum!" and putting aside the musket with his left hand, he struck the man vehemently with the hilt of his sword.

"Fire!" cried the voice of Gabriel Jones from above in a thundering tone, such as I had never before heard issue from his hypocritical lips. "Fire!" and at the same instant the sound of a volley, and a wild scream from the terrified ladies of our party, shook the roof of the building. One of the soldiers who held my brother was in the line of fire of the troops above, and he fell by the shot of his comrades.

At the same moment, before I was well prepared to act, I felt my father catch my arm. Thinking he did so to withhold me from any rashness, I turned towards him. He was ghastly pale—there was a fearful want of meaning in his eye; and for a moment or two I gazed at him in surprise, for he stood firm upon his feet—but the next minute he reeled; and after raising his hand twice to his head, he fell dead at my feet

without a word or groan to speak the passing of the soul from earth.

There was no time for wo. All was now strife and confusion. The musketeers broke their ranks in pouring down the stairs, and in at the door. The cavaliers mingled with them; and clashing swords, detached shots, screams, and groans echoed through the walls dedicated to the God of peace. It was evident, however, that our efforts were vain, for the superior numbers of the Roundheads put serious resistance out of the question. My brother was already in their hands; two or three of our guests and servants had fallen; two or three more by this time had been hurried through the door as prisoners; and my only hope was to force my way through, and to save Emily Langleigh from the fate which threatened us all. While five or six of the gentlemen present were striving with one party of the soldiers, I sprang upon the musketeer opposite to me; and after a moment's struggle, wrenched his piece from his hands, and dashed him to the ground with the butt-end. His right-hand man fired at my head, but missed me; for almost at the same moment that he levelled his piece, the dagger of little Ball-o'-fire was in his throat.

"Follow! follow! quick!" cried the boy, whose presence of mind never deserted him, springing towards me while he spoke, and pointing towards the stairs by which he had lately entered; "catch up the lady! the way under the stairs is clear."

What he said was true. The chapel was full of smoke, which, carried slowly upwards, rolled in thin clouds of bluish white above our heads: but by the open door under the staircase I could see through a number of vaulted rooms beyond, on the long perspective of whose floors the calm light of a September morning was sleeping peacefully. A quick glance around showed me Emily clinging to the altar, before which the good clergyman had cast himself down in prostrate terror. All form or ceremony, under our present circumstances, was of course out of the ques-

tion. A moment's delay would have snatched from us our only chance of escape; and throwing my arm round her, I caught her up, and hurried across the chapel.

A soldier instantly started across my path to stay me; but that daring boy again came to my aid, and stooping down, plunged his knife into the tendons of his leg. The man fell headlong, with his steel cap ringing against the stones of the pavement; and Emily besought me, at the same moment, to loose my hold of her.

"I but embarrass you, dear Henry," she cried—"I but embarrass you. I am strong enough to fly, if you will lead me. I am terrified, but not overcome. I can fly, indeed!"

I did as she bade me; all passed as quick as the lightning. The boy was already through the door; and we were crossing the threshold, when Gabriel Jones marked us as we passed; and darting forward with a look of triumph, and hatred, and mockery, mingling in a sneer that would have done honour to the countenance of a fiend, he seized Emily by the arm.

"Stay, stay! my pretty mistress," he cried, "not so fast! You must wed a better—"

Those words were the last he ever spoke. The musket I had wrenched from the soldier was still in my right hand; the match was yet lighted; and leaving my hold of Emily, I turned upon him, brought the muzzle within an inch of his head, fired; and, springing up nearly three feet in the air, he fell lifeless, with a cry something between a groan and a scream, too fearful even for memory to dwell upon unnecessarily. Again I drew Emily forward, closed the door, locked and double-locked it, and catching her once more in my arms, bore her rapidly through all the well-known passages of the house.

"Where are you going?" cried the boy, as he saw me opening the door of the library. "There is no other door!—they will soon find you there!"

But I hurried on, locked the door behind me; and after a moment's search, found one of the bookcases

which, as I well knew, moved upon its centre, in the manner of a door. I threw it open, and we all passed; but just as I was closing it behind me, I heard the voice of Walter Dixon shouting, at the end of the far passage—

“Where is Hutchinson now? Send him hither, quick! They have escaped by the secret passage he spoke of: bid him show me where it is.”

I thanked Heaven that I had so effectually silenced the miscreant who had betrayed us; and shutting the door, I barred and bolted it with all the means which seemed to be left there for the purpose. Knowing, however, that our farther flight might soon be stopped, by placing sentries round the house, I besought Emily to hasten after me down the small staircase that opened before us.

“As quickly as I can, Harry,” she replied; “but I am rather faint with all I have gone through. Still, go on; I will follow you to the last.”

This private way into the woods had been shown me by my father in former days; and though—as the library was his peculiar room, on which no one was permitted to trespass—I was not very familiar with all the particulars, yet I knew that the door which gave exit from it was surrounded by the thickest part of the forest; and once there, I calculated surely on setting all pursuers at defiance.

We reached the bottom of the staircase, and unlocking the little postern door which opened in the angle of one of the buttresses, issued out into the wood. We were at that moment not twenty yards from the chapel; but the strife seemed over now; and all that we could hear through the open windows was several people talking within, interrupted every now and then by a deep groan, or the clang of a musket grounded on the stone pavement of the building. I felt Emily tremble as she leaned on me; and putting my finger to my lip, to enjoin silence, I again raised her in my arms, and carried her as fast as I could through the windings of the forest paths. In this manner we reached the top

of the cliff, which commanded the cove where the sloop lay. My intention was immediately to set sail for France, and put the wide ocean between us and pursuit; but what was my surprise, on reaching the point from which I had a view over the whole bay, to behold the smuggler standing out to sea!

Immediate security however was the great object, and carrying the dear girl I held to my heart down the face of the crag, by the zigzag path which led to the shore, I turned across the bank of loose stones, about half-way down, and pushing through some straggling bushes that had rooted themselves on the rock, entered one of the caves with which I was familiar. I then bade the boy mark well the cave, and by running down to the shore, ascertain whether the smugglers had left any boat behind, or whether the way to my own boat was clear.

In an instant he sprang down the steepest part of the cliff, and Emily and I were left alone. The tumult of strange mingled feelings that came through my bosom at that moment is impossible to describe. I had seen my home deluged in blood—I had seen my brother carried away a prisoner—I had seen my father fall dead by my side; and yet—strange human nature!—the predominant emotion of my heart was joy at beholding Emily Langleigh standing there by me, rescued from the perils of that fearful morning, and free from a union that was worse than death. I make it as a confession, as a painful confession. Among all the many causes I had for sorrow, my first feeling was gratulation!—selfish gratulation!

“Emily, you are safe!” I cried, as I placed her within the cave. “No one will find us here!”

“Thank God!” she said, “thank God! and next to God, I must thank you, dear Henry;” and as she looked at me the tears started up in her eyes. I felt that there was no cause for longer resisting my own feelings; the picture of Lady Eleanor Fleming that I had seen hanging round my brother’s neck set me free,—the long-repressed deep feelings which had a thousand

times before risen to my lips, now broke forth in the expansive gladness of our deliverance. Had the empire of the world—had my fate here and hereafter depended upon my silence, I could not have refrained; and throwing my arms round her I loved, I poured forth the passionate tale of my deep affection in words of fire. I mingled it strangely and wildly with all the recollections of that sad morning; but those very recollections—the dangers from which I had saved her—the agonies I had myself undergone—the uncertainty of the fate before—the darkness of the scenes we had left behind—all gave a power, and a fervour, and a vehemence to the expression of that long, long silent passion which swept away the common idle forms of life, like straws before a hurricane. She strove not to unclasp the arms that held her—she withdrew not her cheek from the kisses I printed on it—she spoke not a word,—but I felt that she loved me as I loved her; and my heart was satisfied. Her face was bent down, now as crimson as a rose, and her eyes were pressed upon my shoulder, deluging my bosom with tears; but they were drops of agitation, not of sorrow, and I knew for the first time the overpowering joy of being loved. A few minutes calmed her, and gently disengaging herself, she asked, “Why, dear Harry, why did you not tell me this before? Had I known it, I would sooner have died than consent to the sacrifice I had so nearly made this morning. Why, why did you not speak?”

“Because, dearest Emily,” I answered, “my father had pledged his word to yours to wed you to his eldest son; and because I knew that he would sooner discard us all for ever than see that promise broken; because, dear girl, I would not become the rival of my own brother, so long as I thought that in any degree his heart went along with the vows he was about to pledge; but now, Emily, I am convinced that it did not.”

“And so am I, Harry!” she replied, “and so have I been long. He never, never loved me; but now I am convinced he loves another. Did you see that picture?”

she asked, for even in the scenes of terror we had just gone through, such a circumstance could not escape the eye of a woman. "Did you see that picture? No, no! he never loved me; and loving another, he was going to marry me! But yet I must not blame him, for was not I about to do the same? Still it was different, for I did not—I would not—know what I then felt. Women, indeed, have a power of feeling very miserable without striving to discover all the reasons why. I knew that I was wretched, Harry—I knew that I was dooming myself to wretchedness for ever; but I did not know that I—that I, too, loved another. And yet," she continued, drawing a step back, "ought I even now to say so? Am I not nearly your brother's wife—too nearly to retract, Henry? Besides, remember the promise I made your father; and promises to the dead ought, if any thing, to be more sacred than promises to the living. Oh, Henry! let us not indulge in dreaming of what is wrong. You have always been a brother to me—a dear, kind brother, and you shall be a brother to me still; and I will love you as a sister."

Such a sudden change of thought—a change, too, so blighting to all my hopes, was not to be listened to without remonstrance; and I was endeavouring to prove to Emily—though God knew the ultimate fate of all was most uncertain—that she was in no degree bound to my brother by any tie, moral or religious. The passion which animated me had been so long familiar to my mind—so all-engrossing and so consuming, that now it was spoken—now it was breathed beyond the dark sanctuary of my own bosom, it flashed with the impetuosity of the lightning to its object, careless of all that intervened. I remembered past griefs and future prospects alone, as they favoured or opposed the love that was thrilling at my heart, and I forgot entirely the dangers that still surrounded us, while I urged with uncontrollable ardour a thousand arguments in opposition to the scruples which had suddenly seized her. I had convinced her, indeed, that the promise which my father had, I found, drawn from her to wed my brother

could only be effective so long as Frank was desirous that it should be so; and I was proceeding to argue that his evident attachment to another person set her free from the engagement, when loud shouts of pursuit upon the hill above us called our minds forcibly from the first outbreking of those passionate feelings which had so long been painfully imprisoned in our hearts, to the consideration of the peril in which we still stood. As the shouts and cries came nearer and nearer, Emily crept close to my side, and clung to me with a dear twining fold that made my heart throb with happiness.

"Fear not, dear girl!" I whispered, "fear not! a single arm could defend the mouth of this cave against a host."

"O may it never be tried!" replied she, in the same low tone; and at that moment the voices sounded so close that I could not doubt the parliamentarians had traced us, at least as far as the top of the cliff in which the cave was hollowed. It seemed strange to me that they should have so soon discovered our path through the midst of a perplexed wood, in which a thousand ways crossed and recrossed each other in every different direction; and I could not but conclude that they must have found some means of tracking me of which I was not aware, as I heard their voices following without deviation every turn I had taken in my flight from the house. Leaning a little forward, I listened; and it all became plain in a moment.

"Hie on! hie on, Ranger!" cried one voice. "Hark forward! hark forward!" shouted another. "What, at fault! Try back again, Ranger!" said the first. "He does not answer to the name of Ranger," observed a third. "The old forester said his name was Rupert."

It was indeed my favourite and faithful dog Rupert which the villains had set upon my track. The poor beast would have discovered me anywhere. If I lost him in the deepest forest, or the most frequented thoroughfare, he would not miss a step of the way till he rejoined me; and now it was clear that he was tracing my path before my pursuers, and even by the impulse

of fond affection dooming his master to imprisonment and death.

What was to be done? There was no earthly means of staying his progress, or repelling him from the cave. If taken, death would probably be my fate for the resistance I had offered, in common with others, and for the blood which had been consequently spilt. And then what would become of Emily? the dear beloved girl who, in the simplicity of young and innocent love, had just dizzied my very brain with the happiness of acknowledged affection? What would become of her in the hands of a set of brutal villains, who, nine times out of ten, affected superior sanctity but as the hypocritical cloak of foul and unruly passions.

I heard the feet of one of the soldiers rushing down the last turn of the zigzag that led near the mouth of the cave, and the eagerness of the dog, as its peculiar instinct taught it that it was nearing its master. I looked at Emily; and I contemplated, as the only resource, to hurl the animal over the edge the moment it approached, as if it had fallen from the narrow ledge, along which it must run to reach the cave. But then it was a terrible task to slay the poor dog for its very affection, and my mind was still undecided when it turned towards the cave. One soldier alone seemed to keep near the dog; for the path was too steep and rugged to be trod rapidly by any but bold and daring climbers; and even he was only just in time to mark the place where it turned off from the beaten track and crossed the bushes.

"Here! here!" he cried, pausing upon the scanty space afforded by a giddy shelf of rock, and shouting to his companions above. "Holla! here!" and as he cried, the dog ran into the cave, and sprang fondling upon me. "Holla! holla! Come on! come on! They are here!" cried the soldier.

It was all over! We were discovered!—but at that very moment there was the ringing sound of a gunshot from below; and while Emily with instinctive judgment caught up the spaniel in her arms, and stilled its

joy at finding us, in the deepest part of the cave, I sprang forward just sufficiently to see through the brushwood. The Roundheaded fanatic was within two steps: but the shot we had heard had silenced him for ever; and after reeling for a moment drunkenly on the edge, without power to utter a word, he fell headlong down the rock to the beach below. Directly after, three of his comrades followed along the path, shouting imprecations against the slayer of the first. They paused on the same ledge where he had stood the moment before—looking down—and oh! what an instant of dreadful suspense it was while they stood there, as if in doubt. There are some minutes that feel like a lifetime, and that was one, but it was but a minute after all; for Walter Dixon, who was one of the three, almost immediately pointed downward with his hand, exclaiming, "There! there! Quick! and we shall have them yet," and dashing onward down the open path, they were immediately lost to my sight in the turnings which the road necessarily took in descending the steep face of the crag.

I breathed at ease; but I still both listened and gazed; and in a minute after, I saw my own little skiff put out to sea from below the cliff, with two persons on board, and under all the sail she could carry, steer direct for the sloop that was standing off and on in the bay.

Whoever were the persons in the boat, one of them was evidently mistaken by the fanatics for myself, and their pursuit was over when the boat got out to sea. A minute or two after, another soldier came down from above; and, after a short interval, the four returned, bearing up among them the body of the man who had been shot from the beach. They passed again within ten yards of the mouth of the cave, and I could hear the trail of the dead man's feet, as they half drew, half carried him up the steep. Their steps receded however, were lost, and once more, in the joy of security, I clasped Emily to my heart.

We were now indeed safe for the time; but caution

and patience were wanted still to effect our ultimate escape. If, as I believed, the two persons I had seen in the boat were my little Ball-o'-fire and one of the boatmen he had accidentally met with, beyond doubt they would return to seek us; but equally beyond doubt they would not return till night. All that we could do then was to remain calmly where we were; and seating ourselves in the farthest part of the cave, we talked long and earnestly over all that had passed, and all that was to come.

In truth, it was as strange a sight to see as ever man beheld,—so lovely a creature as Emily Langleigh, dressed in all the splendour of her bridal attire, sitting on the damp ground of a cold dim cave, and weeping over all the dreadful scenes of her marriage day.

As the hurry and the tumult passed from my brain, and the first selfish gratulation on my own and her security gave way to other memories, in good faith I could have wept too; but weeping was in vain, and the important consideration of our future fate pressed momentarily upon us. We were both calmer. The interruption which had taken place in our conversation, and the moments of anxiety and danger that had intervened since our mutual feelings had first found utterance, seemed to have familiarized us with the theme. It appeared as if several days had passed instead of minutes, and I spoke of all my wishes and all my hopes, not coolly indeed, for that I never could do, but without that wild and impetuous confusion which had attended the first out-burst of the passion which had before cost me so many daily struggles to suppress. Emily was all that was gentle, and kind, and affectionate. She had owned her love, and there was nothing more to be owned. But still in regard to the promise she had made, I found her firmer than I expected—firmer than I wished. That promise, she said, my brother's conduct and her own feelings justified her so far in violating that she would never wed a man who did not love her, and while she loved another. But still, she said, she would never give her hand to any one till Frank had

himself freed her from that promise. She feared not, she said, to write to him, or to tell him all her feelings, if she ever met him again; and she doubted not, that both for his own sake and hers, he would at once set her at liberty; but, till that time, she would hold herself bound as if by a vow.

I reasoned, I argued in vain; and at length, when I pointed out that she must travel far with no other protection than mine, when I spoke of the injury her fair name might sustain by such a circumstance, she laid her hand confidently in mine.

"I do not fear, in the least, Harry," she said; "there are but two beings in the world to whom I could be held in any degree responsible, your brother and yourself. As my resolution is fixed never to give him my hand (nor does he desire it), he cannot complain; and surely when you are the witness, the guide, and the guardian of all my steps, you too must be satisfied. As for doubting you, Harry, or for dreaming that I should ever have cause to draw one sigh for your conduct towards me, when my whole reliance, and hope, and confidence are in you, I do not believe that you would form a thought to the injury of Emily Langleigh, for all that the whole earth could give."

She knew nothing of mankind in general, or of any world but the pure world of her own thoughts; and I felt that I could not tell her of half of its baseness without wounding her feelings, and lowering myself. Determined, therefore, to act as she wished, and be to her as a brother, till I could gain from Frank the renunciation which I doubted not he would willingly give, I ceased to oppose her further. We now waited impatiently for the coming on of night; and though I twice ventured a few steps among the copsewood, to see if I could perceive any person in the vicinity, I did not go near the open path till the stars began to look out through the clear blue sky.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE night came on calm and clear; and the star Jupiter, with his soft sweet light, shone more and more distinct every minute in the opposite sky. Every bosom, I believe, has its own peculiar sort of superstition; and, in spite of reason, I have always connected in my own mind that star with my fate. When it has looked dim and dull, I have tried not to feel depressed; and when, as that night, it has shone bright and clear, I have always drawn hope and consolation from its aspect. It looked out for some time quite alone in the sky, which remained full of the radiance of day long after the sun had set; but at length, one after another, the fixed stars began to appear; and the blue robe of heaven was all gemmed with shining light. Running my eye, from time to time, over the darkening bosom of the sea, I strove to discover whether any boat came off from the sloop, which lay a dim black mass about three miles from shore. None, however, appeared; and, after waiting some time, I left Emily, holding poor Rupert in the cave; and, promising not to go far, ventured out to see what was passing around.

Pausing and listening every now and then, as I advanced, I came down within about twenty yards of the seashore; but the tide was flowing in, with rather a full swell; and I could see nothing, but one dark mass of waters, as, partially relieved by the white foam, it came rolling in dim waves, one billow over the other. A moment after, however, I thought I heard voices borne along with the roar of the waters. After a time they became more and more distinct; and I could see a boat heaving up over the waves not far from the shore, and making for the cove where the smuggler had landed his goods. As there might still be a doubt, I

drew cautiously back to the cave, to which place my little messenger was sure to direct his steps; and, as I ascended the path, I heard the rush of the boat into the cove, the unshipping of the oars, and the landing of the men.

Worn out by fatigue and agitation, Emily was asleep when I returned; and her fair beautiful face, which looked like that of some lovely statue, had fallen down upon the silky black spaniel that lay sleeping also, on the little ledge where the dear girl had rested her arm. In the dim light of the cave, she looked as if she were dead; and as my mind turned to the events of the morning, when a thousand chances of death had surrounded her, a cold shudder came over me, at the memory of what had passed, and the risk that she had run. The ideas thus called up were any thing but agreeable; and yet I could not wake her. There was a sort of fascination in those contemplations, sad as they were, that I could not conquer; and I stood and let my mind range on into time.

"If she become mine," I thought, "and fate should destine me to survive her, even thus, sometime or another, must I contemplate her, lying in death, when a thousand endearing memories, accumulated during life, have attached her still more to my heart. Thus must I gaze upon that fair pure brow for the last time ere I consign it to the earth. Now, the lightest touch will wake her into being and animation, and brightness and love; but when that day comes, the fondest kiss from her husband's lips will fail to call her into recollection. I must then gaze without any hope, but that which comes from beyond the grave."

"Oh, it is a sad and solemn thing to look upon one that we love dearly, in so deep and still a sleep! There is an awful something in it beyond repose. The strange mystery of sleep itself, that extraordinary suspension of the soul's commune with external things, that temporary extinction of being, so like death itself,—an extinction which would render death too fearful in the contemplation, if we did not escape from it in the

hope of immortality,—is not alone that which makes the sight nearly allied to pain. It is not the picture of our own death we see, so much as that of the beloved. It is the prophetic spirit within, speaking of ties to be broken, and of hopes to fail, and of affections to wither, while a thousand cherished memories twine funeral flowers to decorate the bier of the future. The only thing whose slumber does not seem to speak of death is an infant.

As I was still gazing, I felt some one pull my sleeve behind; and turning, beheld little Ball-o'-fire, who had glided in perfectly unperceived.

"The boat is here," he whispered, "and the people ready to obey your commands."

"What made the sloop get out into the bay?" I asked, in the same tone. "Its absence had nearly lost our lives."

My voice instantly woke Emily from her slumber; and starting up, she gazed wildly at the boy for a moment; but his presence explained itself; and he proceeded to answer my question by informing me that the smugglers had been alarmed by the passage of soldiers through the country that morning; and, fearing that they were betrayed or discovered, had put to sea, leaving a man on a hill near Masterton House to make a signal when the troops were gone.

Notwithstanding all the news which the boy brought to them, and his desire that they should return and deliver us even by force, they could not be persuaded even to send a boat on shore till that signal was made. It was to be a fire lighted on the hill where the man was posted; and about ten minutes before the boat left the ship, the beacon had been kindled; in consequence of which, the captain of the sloop had not only sent a boat well manned on shore, but had also determined on bringing his vessel again into the neighbourhood of the cove.

This information changed all our plans. If the soldiers had indeed left Masterton House, I determined immediately to return thither myself, and ascertain

more clearly the whole events of that unfortunate day; but Emily, who had heard the whole of the boy's account, entreated that at least I would not venture thither till I had taken means to assure myself that the house was clear. In my little page, however, I had a ready messenger; and he at once undertook to go and gain all tidings from the man who had been left to watch upon the hill.

To the praises which I bestowed upon him for his courage and his conduct he turned almost an inattentive ear; and only asked in return,

“Was not that a neat shot at two hundred yards, which tumbled the robustious Roundhead over the cliff? I found your long gun loaded in the boat-house; and once I thought of shooting the dog, as I saw it leading them down the bank; but then, when I perceived that to bring down the parliamentarian would do just as well, I whizzed him the bullet just under the bandoleer, and sailed away with old Tom the boatman for the sloop. I made myself as big as I could, and folded my arms, and cocked my hat, that the fools might take me for you; and so I believe they did, for with a fair wind, we were half a mile from shore before they got down to the beach.”

Such was the habit of danger and bloodshed in which the lad had been brought up, that his own life, or that of a fellow-being, seemed to him a matter of very little import; and such were the inveterate prejudices he had acquired by living from his birth alone with one party, that he spoke on all occasions of the slaying of one of the parliamentary partisans but as the death of some noxious animal.

While he started away up the hill, I proceeded to speak with the smugglers at the cove; and found them perfectly ready to obey my commands in every thing, provided they were paid for it. The means of satisfying them fortunately I possessed; for on the morning of that very day—with the intention of quitting England for ever as soon as Emily Langleigh was the wife of another—I had loaded my purse with all the money

which my father had placed at my disposal two days before. Part was in bills on goldsmiths in London; but near two hundred pounds was in gold; and a few pieces, as an earnest of future payment, made the smugglers my men for ever. I now stationed two above the ledge that led to the cave, and two below; and procuring from them the means of arming myself more completely, for hitherto I had possessed nothing but my sword, I waited for the return of little Ball-o'-fire, to set out myself with three of the sailors to ascertain the events which had taken place after I quitted the chapel.

The boy was not long in coming—for his activity was most extraordinary; and in the short time he had been absent, he had gathered more intelligence than a common scout would have brought in a day. The man on the hill, he said, had seen no body of people ride from the house till nearly sunset. An occasional horseman, indeed, had come and gone; but it was not till late that he saw the whole troop, as it appeared to him, quit the place, carrying with them a number of prisoners. This was the sum of his news; but, after quitting him, the boy had made his way to the house, where he had seen through the wood a sentry at the front door. Proceeding thence to the back of the house, he had climbed unperceived to the windows of each of the rooms in the lower story, and declared that only one, besides the servant's offices, was tenanted. In that he had seen two of the fanatics carousing after their day's exploits. Neither of them, however, belonged to the order of military saints; and, from all that he saw, he judged the house but slightly guarded.

Such news immediately determined my movements, although Emily, I saw, would fain have had me abandon my intention. She did not oppose me, indeed; but she clasped her hands with a look of mingled fear and resignation, which had almost turned me from my purpose.

At the mouth of the cave I left little Ball-o'-fire, as the best guard that I could assign her, and set out upon

an expedition of some of whose events I own I am heartily ashamed. I must plead, however, beforehand, that no man was ever placed in a situation more fitted to excite violent and angry passions in his breast than that in which I stood.

Approaching quietly through the woods, followed by the three well-armed sailors from the smuggler, I soon came in sight of the man who was placed to keep guard at the door, and at the first glance perceived that nothing military could possibly form any part of his real profession. Little precaution was necessary to surprise him. We were upon him in a moment: the firelock was snatched from his hands; and silence being enforced by a pistol held to his head, he stood gaping in terror and astonishment. We now tied him hand and foot with some ropes that had been brought from the boat; and ascending the steps I pushed open the door, and entered the great hall.

I never remember to have seen it before without finding some of the retainers of the family ready to answer a summons, or to welcome a guest; but now it was totally vacant, and the dim lamp, whose feeble rays twinkled along the rusty suits of armour, and the branching trophies of our forest sport, looked like the last poor heir of a decaying family, endeavouring to increase his own faint lustre by reflection from the proud memories of ages past.

The room where the boy had represented the two fanatics as carousing was at the other extreme of the house; but it was not thither that I turned my steps in the first place. Leaving one of my new followers to guard the door, I proceeded with a hasty pace towards the chapel. There was a light burning within; and I listened at the door, as it stood ajar, but there was no sound, and I entered.

Oh, what a sight it was! Some one had lighted the great lamp in the middle; and its beams, spreading all through the place, fell upon a thousand objects, such as seldom, I believe, have been mingled in one spot. In twenty places, the fine oak carving and gilded railwork

were torn and perforated with "musket-balls. The marble pavement was soiled with struggling feet, and stained with gore. Two dead bodies were stretched at length on the benches where we usually sat when service was there performed; while from pillar to pillar hung the garlands of late flowers, which had been collected at great expense for Emily's marriage-day; and trampled and bloody on the pavement lay a multitude of the same frail blossoms which had been strewed upon her path that morning. A hat and plume lay here; a cloak was cast down there; and, as I advanced through the aisle, I kicked a rapier from my way, and set my foot upon a discharged pistol. The whole place remained as the fray had left it; and the only sign of care, or even of decency that was visible, appeared in the arrangement of those who had fallen, whose limbs had been composed, and whose bodies had been removed from the exact place where they had died, and were now laid out in different parts of the chapel.

With an aching heart, and a shuddering frame, I advanced among the dead towards two bodies that were stretched upon the steps of the altar. The one every fibre of my whole frame told me, long before I was near it, was that of my father; and beside it the indecent villains had placed the traitorous, detestable slave who had betrayed us all. Good God!—the canting fanatic—the low, base, abhorred carcass of the hypocritical menial, whose whole life had been a lie, and who died in the midst of his own treachery, to lie beside the upright, the noble, the inflexible lord to whose death he was accessory!

It was too much for human nature to bear; and striding up to the altar, I spurned the body down the steps with my heel, as if it had been the carcass of a dog. As I did so, a voice near me said,—“Forbear! —Henry Masterton, forbear!”

I am but little a believer in spectres, notwithstanding the arguments of our good friend Glanville; but, I acknowledge, I started with some feelings of awe at those words, pronounced so suddenly beside me, at

such an hour, and in such a place. But the matter was explained in a moment; for, on turning round, I saw that the door which led into the wood was open, and in the dark portal, over which the branches of the old forest-trees cast a deeper gloom than night itself, I beheld Lady Margaret Langleigh.

"Forbear, my dear young gentleman, forbear!" she said. "The offences of that clay are over; the offences of the spirit which inhabited it are judged by the only Just One."

I felt ashamed that any one had seen the unworthy act of hatred I had committed; and hastily demanded how she had escaped from the horrible scenes of the morning, and from the imprisonment to which all the rest who had been found in the chapel had apparently been subjected.

"I found refuge in the wood," she replied. "I saw you and our poor Emily fly through the door beside the staircase. Those who rushed in pursuit of you cut off the same path from any one else; but in a moment after, I remarked that the door into the forest was comparatively free, and with what little strength I possessed, I made my way to it, found it open, and got into the park. There, amid the brushwood and the long grass, I contrived to conceal myself, even while they were searching for you through every part of the forest. I have been too much accustomed through life, my dear Henry, to such terrible scenes, not to have all my faculties at command, to remark every thing that passes; and I soon gathered, by one sign or another, that those who pursued you had been baffled in their chase. I might have got away on foot; but as my name is probably in the warrant from the council of state, they would soon have found me if I returned to my own poor dwelling; and I also had some hope of seeing you and our dear Emily again. I remained therefore concealed till about half an hour ago, when, on approaching the chapel, I saw some one engaged in lighting the lamp, and apparently about to rifle the dead. He saw me too, and took me, I believe, for

something unearthly, for he fled with no small speed; and I remained watching near the door, fearful of entering, lest he should return, yet sufficiently overcome with fatigue and exhaustion to covet repose even by these poor silent things of clay."

My story, as far as I thought fit to tell it, was soon told; and Lady Margaret, without absolutely promising to accompany Emily and myself to France, agreed at once to return with me to the place where I had left one so dear to us both.

"Come and rest in the great hall, dear lady," I said; "I have yet some duties to perform here, and I have to drive back some of the wolves to Exeter. After that, we will rejoin our Emily, as you so kindly call her, and determine the plans to which this terrible day must drive us."

After supporting Lady Margaret to the hall, I led my two sailors at once to the little parlour as it was called, where my page had seen the fanatics through the window; and with pistols in our hands, we entered the room at once. Habacuc Grimstone, with his nose glistening from the streams of the strong waters before him, sat at one end of the table; and another of his tribe—I neither know nor cared who—at the other. Both started upon their feet; but their feet, from the godly potations in which they had been indulging, were any thing but steady beneath them; and though Habacuc, unsheathing his sword, exclaimed, "Lo! I will go forth against the Philistines," a blow with the butt-end of the pistol brought him to his seat, both more sober and more pacific.

The other worthy showed no signs of pugnacity whatever. His first exclamation had been, "It is the spectre!" but we soon furnished him with very convincing proofs of our substantial existence.

It is useless to dwell upon what followed; I found that Grimstone and his companion, and a clerk, who had enacted sentinel, had courageously remained after the soldiers had carried off their prisoners, in order, as they said, to keep the house and all that it contained for the Parliamentary commissioners, who were expected

late the next evening. What part of the spoil of the Philistines, as they called us, they intended to appropriate to themselves as the reward of their bravery, I do not know; but I am sorry to say, that I ordered their hands to be tied behind their backs, and made the sailors impel them for a mile on the road to Exeter with horsewhips, which were applied most dexterously. The bellows of the fanatics rang in my ears for long, as they were driven on the road, roaring for mercy, and cursing Walter Dixon for the precipitancy with which he had thought fit to withdraw his troops, and march his prisoners towards London.

I have blamed myself since for the treatment that I showed them; but, at the time, believed myself to be highly merciful in not hanging them over the gate, to welcome the Parliamentary commissioners the following day.

CHAPTER XVII.

My next task was to examine whether any of the old servants had been left in the house; and oh! what a feeling of desolation—what a sense of the breaking-up of old associations—of the eternal destruction of that sweet thing home, came over my heart, as I paced through the lonely chambers of my paternal dwelling, and the wide echoing of my footsteps spoke the dead vacancy of all. Every room had its memories and its feelings. The places where I had played in infancy, and ranged in boyhood, and dreamed in youth, each with the melancholy voice of silence, told that all I remembered, bright joys and transient sorrows, the sports of my earlier, the visions of my latter days,—belonged to the solemn, the unchangeable past. The old familiar faces too, that had surrounded me from my birth to my manhood, were all gone; and the only

19*

person I could discover in the house was an old man who had been butler in former days, but had resigned his keys a year before, to a younger and more active man, and had since enjoyed ease and dignity as a retired officer of the household.

After his first surprise at seeing me was over, I learned from him that all the servants had been either carried away to Exeter as prisoners, or driven out of the house, except a party of women, whom Habacue Grimstone had locked up in an upper room, praying all the while that he might not be led into temptation. The old butler had been left to serve the magistrate and his companions; and after making him open the door for the poor girls, who came out of the dark room where they had been confined, one after another, like pigeons out of a dovecot, I chose the two eldest of the bevy, and with the old man returned to the chapel to perform the most painful task of all. As I crossed the hall, however, to my surprise I found little Ball-o'-fire, who had been sent by Emily to ascertain that I was safe; and charging him to tell her that the house was clear of all enemies, and that I would join her in an hour, I loaded him with some refreshments, of which I knew she must stand much in need, and bade him conduct Lady Margaret Langleigh to the cave.

The sailors had by this time returned, and I proceeded to the chapel, in order to deposite the remains of my father in the vault which contained the dust of many of our ancestors. It was a sad and terrible task; and though he had been stern and reserved towards his children, as towards every one, yet as I gazed upon the marble countenance of the dead, on which death had left scarcely a change of expression, and felt that my eyes beheld that countenance for the last time, every kind word that he had spoken in his life rang in my ear—every fine and noble quality rose to my mind; and the spirit of Lord Masterton, purified from every blemish by affection and regret, was present to the memory of his son, even as that spirit, I humbly trust,

stands before the throne of mercy purified by the love of his Redeemer.

The bullet which had carried his death along with it had passed through his chest from side to side, but little of his blood was spilt; and his limbs lay calm and composed, as if the body had scarcely felt the parting of the soul. With my own hands I wrapped his head in his cloak, and raising the stone that covered the steps into the vault, we bore him down among the dusty memorials of a past race. The coffins of the dead stood round about us on every side; and the consciousness of all the many tears which must have been shed over that spot seemed to justify and yet repress my own. We dug a grave under the pavement of the vault; and placing the body within, I slowly, and with feelings that are difficult to tell, laid the first earth upon my father's head. The drops burst forth as I gave the mattock to another hand; and I too added the tribute of my tears to the sad record of that vault, where generation after generation had wept the broken ties of kindred affection. When all was finished, I laid my father's star and riband upon the grave, to mark the spot for future years; and reascending to the chapel, we replaced the stone above the vault.

As we did so, I observed lying near a folded paper in the form of a letter, which had evidently dropped unnoticed in the struggle of that morning; and taking it up, I looked for the address. There was none upon it, however, and it had been apparently enclosed in a larger packet, for it was without a seal, and open. Occupied with other thoughts, I held it in my hand for a moment; and it was a chance whether I threw it down without further examination, or sought for the contents. At length I unfolded it as I walked from the chapel, and what I saw soon made me pause. It contained but a few lines, written by a female hand, but they were to this effect:—

“Do not doubt, beloved! I am ready and willing to sacrifice all for you. Let every thing proceed as if

6. A. Thimeworth

you consented to the whole. Let the ceremony begin, if it be necessary. I have the promise of one who never yet failed me, that it shall be interrupted. However, mark well, that, whatever you do, and whatever occurs, you make no resistance, for though what takes place may seem to menace your safety, remember that your safety has been taken care of by your

“ELEANOR.”

And was it my brother—could it indeed be my brother, who had drawn down upon his family all the misery which that day had produced? Such was the first question I asked myself, as I saw that the billet I held in my hand was evidently the writing of Lady Eleanor Fleming, and doubted not for a moment that it had been addressed to Frank Masterton.

The joy which the page had remarked in his countenance on receiving a packet that morning, the frequent journeys of Gabriel Jones to Exeter, and a thousand circumstances in my brother's conduct which had appeared strange, were at once explained by the supposition that Lady Eleanor had undertaken to free him from his difficult situation with regard to Emily, and had fatally fulfilled her promise. Yet what, I asked myself, could she hope by the means she had used—what but destruction even to the person she loved? Or had she and Frank both been deceived by some deeper plotter still, of whom Gabriel Jones was but another tool? To this opinion my mind turned more and more strongly, as I remembered Frank's anxiety to speak with me alone that very morning. Such a formidable display of military force as had been brought against us, the despatch of a major-general from London, the arrest or death of some of the noblest men in Devonshire, could not be all done to please a woman—could not be all the machinations of a rascally valet.

Still it was evident that the correspondence between Lady Eleanor and Frank Masterton had never ceased since he had returned to his paternal dwelling. Still it was clear that a passion which could lead him only into crime and sorrow,—a passion which I had fancied was

dying away, had been nourished and encouraged, even while he was affecting courtship towards the dear pure girl of whose hand he had so nearly deprived me; and I could not but shudder when I considered the mastery which that passion must have attained over his once strong and commanding mind, to make him stoop to such deceit, and fancied the agony that he must feel from the great share which that deceit had had in his father's death.

I doubted not, however, that punishment—severe and bitter as it must be, when mingled with the scourging of their own conscience—had by this time overtaken both my unhappy brother and her who had led him on to destruction. I felt sure that both had been deceived; and that while Frank was at this time a prisoner, destined perhaps to be one of the many sacrifices hourly making to political rancour, loaded with the reproaches of his own heart, and the consciousness that to gratify a criminal passion he had contributed to his own fate, to the death of his father, and the ruin of his family, Lady Eleanor Fleming would have before her the sad spectacle of him she loved so passionately, ruined, and perhaps slain, by the very means she had taken to withdraw him from his own duty, while she ran headlong into the breach of her most sacred obligations.

How much better, I thought—how much better would it have been for Frank to have boldly told my father that he could not love Emily Langleigh—to have acknowledged that he loved another, but that his love was hopeless, and to have sought counsel and support from him, placed by nature to afford it to his children. Oh, that fatal want of moral courage, to how many sins and miseries does it not lead the children of earth! If we dared but encounter our weaknesses, how many more terrible enemies should we escape in our crimes!

Yet while I thus reasoned, I felt that I had not been myself quite sincere. Had I openly informed my brother or my father of my love for Emily Langleigh, perhaps some portion of what had befallen, might have been averted. But still, though I took to myself some

blame I felt that my motives and intentions were right ; that I had made deep sacrifices, and that I had been actuated by no base or selfish principle.

Such may be considered the summary of the thoughts to which the letter I had discovered gave rise ; but other more immediate considerations now forced themselves upon me. I found that a double seal had been placed upon all the doors through the house ; and I doubted not that it was the purpose of the Parliamentary commissioners, who were to arrive the next day to appropriate and divide every thing that they could discover in the place ; and I feared that those valuable family papers, which nothing could restore, might be lost or destroyed amid the rapacious pillaging that was likely to ensue.

To carry them with me, in the uncertain and adventurous life to which I was probably destined, would be as great a risk as leaving them where they were ; and though the house, like all the houses of its epoch, contained many places constructed for the purposes of concealment, yet the official plunderers of the Parliament had, by frequent practice, become wonderfully skilful in detecting all such repositories. Feeling, however, that a change of times must come, when very probably every document of our present state might prove invaluable, I made free with the Parliamentary seals on my father's cabinet ; and taking out the deeds and titles which it contained, I proceeded alone to one of the most remote and petty bed-chambers in the house, where, raising a square of the oak floor, I deposited the papers, covered them over with a heap of flue and dust, which had collected there during many years, and replacing the board, took care to leave no trace of its removal.

The thought crossed my mind of carrying away with me what plate and jewels I could transport to the ship ; but I could not bear the idea of pillaging my father's house, though I knew that all I left would fall into far more unworthy hands. I contented myself, therefore, with sending one of the servants to the apartments of my dear Emily, to bring me the jewels which belonged to her, and such part of her wardrobe as

might be most useful to her. Here, however, I found that the plunder had already proceeded far. The girl indeed brought me a quantity of her mistress's clothes, but not a jewel was to be seen; and in my own chamber I discovered that the same rapacity had been exercised. The very hilt had been wrenched off one of my swords, for the gold with which it was decorated; and one or two trinkets that I possessed, such as rings and hat-buttons, had been swept away with the rest of the moveable plunder.

There was something in this reckless disregard to every thing that is at other moments held sacred, that made me sick at heart; and bidding the servants, who had all parents or relations among our tenantry, disperse with the morning light, I loaded the sailors of the sloop with the different articles of apparel which I thought might prove useful in our flight, and once more crossed the threshold of my paternal dwelling.

The moon had by this time risen high, and I could not forbear descending the steps, and walking to the far extreme of the bowling-green, to take one more glance of the old mansion as a whole, before I left it, perhaps for ever.

Oh what a place of memories is the home of our youth! the spot in which we have passed that time of life when every fresh idea, won by the young mind from the world around it, is a positive joy! Those are the days in which we gain; manhood is the time in which we use—perhaps abuse—the store; and age is the period when every hour is a loss. Look at what spot of earth we will, there is none that we shall see with such tender feelings as the passing place of our early hours.

There it stood before me with its tall dark masses, rising calm and clear upon the solemn moonlight of the sky; while round about, the immemorial trees swept far and wide a sea of green waving branches, on whose rounded heads the clear light of the planet poured in effulgent gentleness. From every pinnacle and tower, under each old oak and heavy chestnut, from the careful garden with its trim straight rows, from each glade, and grove, and avenue, and lawn,

looked forth phantom remembrances of the past. The whole scene was living with thronged associations; but they were associations that for every smile called down a shower of tears. The wringing yearning of the heart for the return of hours gone for ever, was more than I could long bear, and plunging into the dark path that led towards the cliff, I left that place of many memories behind.

The two sailors that I had left to guard the road were firm upon their watch; and as I passed on to the cave, I found that my provident page had added lights to the refreshment that I had bidden him carry thither; and under their influence the place of our retreat formed a wild and singular scene, of which the boy himself, scarce twelve years old—standing at the mouth of the cavern, with a pistol in his hand, backed by the dim half-lighted excavation, on whose damp and ragged roof and sides the rays of the lamps caught with a fitful glistening—formed not the least extraordinary feature. I found Emily's head resting on the bosom of Lady Margaret Langleigh, whose sad experience in misfortune well qualified her to counsel and assist us in our present state. Each had been weeping; and I saw at once, by Emily's eyes, that all our mutual feelings were now known to her companion; but I saw also by the smile of joy that lighted up the countenances of both on my return, that those feelings were likely to meet with no opposition, from even the maturer judgment of Lady Margaret.

"You have acted nobly, my dear Henry," she said, as I advanced towards them; and those were words of no small consolation, for at moments when we find the noblest and best minds failing around us, it is but natural that we should doubt the very motives of our bosoms. "You have acted nobly, my dear Henry, and well deserve your reward," said Lady Margaret; "and I thank God that brought me near you, for I hope to be of comfort and assistance to you both. Let me be as a mother to you, my children. This land is no longer a land for me. I have nothing to bind me to it, and it

will be wiser for us all to spend a season in France, till the storms that desolate our native country are passed. My presence, too, will be a protection to this dear girl, till such time as circumstances permit you, Henry, to be her lawful protector."

"And do you then, my dear lady," I demanded, "do you then approve of the too severe scruples which Emily—I will not say unkindly—but at least somewhat harshly, places between us? Would it not be better for this dear girl to yield me her hand at once, as soon as we arrive in France; and give me that right to guard, to support, and guide her, which no other title but that of her husband can bestow?"

"I do not say that she would not be justified in so doing," replied Lady Margaret, "but her not doing so, my dear Harry, proceeds from a delicacy of feelings which the man who seeks her for his wife should be the last to wish lessened even by a shade. Do not suppose, Henry Masterton, that during the time I have spent in the same dwelling with you, and Emily, and your brother, that I have been blind to what was passing around me. Do not suppose that I did not see your passionate love towards her, or her affection for you, unacknowledged as it was even to her own heart; and still less imagine that I have not seen all along the coldness and apathy of your brother towards the woman he was going to wed. That apathy was difficult to account for. It surprised, it distressed me. I mentioned it to your father; who replied coldly that it was all manner, that he had had it from a boy. The only other person whom I could have consulted was afar; but still I was unsatisfied; and had more than once nearly demanded of you—yes, of you yourself, Henry Masterton—whether, in the course of your expedition into Kent, your brother had formed any connexion that he was afraid or ashamed to acknowledge to his parent."

She fixed her eyes keenly on me as she spoke, as if the question were fully as much present as past, and I felt that I reddened under her scrutiny.

"I feel myself still bound, Lady Margaret," I an-

swered, "as I felt myself bound even when it almost cost me existence, to refrain from divulging any thing. I may casually know of my brother's private affairs; but it is very evident to us all—"

"You need say no more, Harry," replied Lady Margaret. "I see and understand it all. Before I came to Masterton House, Captain Charles Watson, who had once been one of my dead husband's attendants, and who commanded a troop in the regiment you raised, informed me that your brother halted so long at a village in Kent, where he spent his whole days with a fair widow, that the soldiers murmured loudly at his delay; that your brother was not wounded in battle, but in a duel; and that you commanded the regiment on all occasions of active service. I ask you not whether this be true, my dear young gentleman; but I tell you that I came to your dwelling grieving that the hand of my poor Emily was to be given to the elder instead of the younger brother. How much more did I grieve when I found that for that purpose the course of mutual love was to be crossed in every way! But to speak no more of what is past, I now feel sure from all I have seen, and heard, and pondered, that your brother will willingly resign to you a hand which he does not value at its desert. As soon as he does so, Emily, I am certain, will not hesitate a moment. But till then, Harry, do not press her to violate what she regards as a duty."

"I will not, Lady Margaret," I replied; "I will not, dearest Emily: but under such circumstances, my beloved, you must let me take the speediest measures to bring my happiness near. Duty and inclination both call me now towards London. I cannot, I ought not, to leave my brother without aid or assistance, under his present circumstances. I must strive, if possible, to set him free, and at the same time I will undertake to gain his resignation of a hand that is mine by a thousand better rights than his. I will first accompany you to the coast of France; and then, after having left you in security and comfort, I will disguise my person, and

under a feigned name make my way to London. Few people know me, if any, in that part of the country; and though I may be forced to dissemble, my dissembling in such a cause is more than justifiable."

Emily seemed not a little alarmed at the idea of my venturing into the very vortex of political strife; and I almost believe that, had I pressed her to recant her scruples at that moment, she would not have persisted in awaiting my brother's formal resignation of her hand. But the anxious and painful scenes through which I had lately passed, gave me a sort of thirst for that final and complete certainty which would admit of no doubt or change; and I would have encountered difficulties a thousand-fold greater than my proposed enterprise presented, to remove every shade of fear or regret from my union with Emily Langleigh.

I was sanguine also, and full of hope. The consciousness of being beloved gave a new spring to my courage and my expectations; and I felt in my bosom that spirit of enterprise which, when it is strong and permanent, contributes even a greater share than genius to the accomplishment of great designs.

I now informed Lady Margaret that the sloop was at my command for the next month, and inquired whether it might not be wiser to turn our prow towards Holland, whose jealousy of the Parliamentary power was avowed, and whose internal circumstances were tranquil, rather than to France, which, under an infant king and a weak regency, was threatened with disorders as terrible almost as those which convulsed England.

"As I go with you," replied the lady, "my voice shall be for France, for many, many, many reasons;" and, seeing some surprise in my countenance at her strong predilection for that country, she added, "in the first place, French is as familiar to us all as our own tongue, which, Heaven knows, Dutch is not. In the next place, I hold a small pension from the French government, given to me by our unhappy queen; and believe me, my dear Henry, we shall need to husband all our resources; for though, doubtless, you believe,

in the blessed confidence of youth, that with your high spirit, and your good sword, you can win wherewithal to support yourself and Emily at any time; yet I, from the sad experience of age, know that such hopes are often deceitful, and can tell you, that dull want and carking care are hard to be borne, even when love lends his light pinions to aid us in supporting the load."

Emily looked as if she doubted the hard truth that the good old lady spoke; but by assuring Lady Margaret that I had enough to bear our expenses for some time, if managed with frugality, I did more to calm her fears on that score than any professions of my powers of endurance would have been able to effect.

I now proposed that the sailors, whom I had left with their companions on the watch, should bring in the packages with which I had charged them, and which contained the means of forming a temporary bed in the cave for Emily and Lady Margaret; but to this the elder lady objected.

"Nay, nay, Henry," she said, "in five years of turbulence and danger, I have learned that in nothing man should lose the moment, and that of all moments, the most necessary to seize is the moment of escape. Many a noble head has rolled upon the scaffold by delaying till to-morrow. Let us, my son, depart to-night. Under such a moon as that which is now shining without, we shall be half-way to France before to-morrow morning. Hie thee then down to the water, and let us put the green waves between us and danger before another sun rises above the friendly sea."

Emily too, though exhausted and fatigued, was eager to depart; and I was not unwilling. On going on board, and speaking with the skipper, I found that he also was anxious to quit a shore where he had accomplished all that he wished, and where all that he could expect further was difficulty, if not danger. The appearance of the soldiers in the morning, had awakened fears in his bosom, which were not yet allayed; the wind was favourable, the sea was calmer than in the evening, and every thing was prepared to set sail.

I accordingly communicated these tidings to Emily

and Lady Margaret; the packages were sent down to the boat, the sailors were recalled, and I led Emily out into the open air. A mingled sensation of terror and agitation seized her as she came forth from the mouth of the cave, and she had nearly fainted; but a moment's pause recalled her courage and renewed her strength, and proceeding slowly down the path to the cove, we entered the boat, which immediately pushing off, we reached the ship, after rolling for a few minutes over the round unsteady waves.

When we were all on board, orders were instantly given for getting under weigh for St. Malo. The only cabin that the ship contained was appropriated to Emily and Lady Margaret; and, at my request, they went down to rest before the vessel got out into the more turbulent waters that rolled beyond the sheltering arms of the land on each side of the bay. For my own part, sitting down on the deck, with little Ball-o'-fire coiled up almost like a dog at my feet, I gazed now at the electric waves as they flashed in living fire by the side, and now at the moonlit line of coast that kept slowly receding from my view. Ere an hour had passed, we had issued forth from my own sweet bay. The wind freshened in our favour, and, holding on a steady course over the wide sea, we put league after league of the dim waters between us and the merry shores of England.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE will pass over the voyage, which offered no incident of any moment. The wind was high, but full in our favour; and the sea, though rough, was not so much so as might have been expected. About seven o'clock the next morning, we caught a distant view of Guernsey; and about twelve, the long line of the French coast, with some low sandy ground in front, and a range of high rocks and cliffs to the left, ap-

peared in sight. Emily, who had been accustomed from very early years to sail about the bay in my boat, did not suffer at all from sea-sickness; and leaving Lady Margaret below, who, after a terrible night of illness, had now fallen asleep, she came up to watch with me our approach to the shores of France.

For two hours she sat beside me, as the sloop glided on over the blue waters, towards the port, that every moment grew more and more distinct; and those two hours were the shortest that my remembrance can recall through life. Our conversation was desultory and dreamy, but full of hope and love, and not the less sweet, perhaps, that it was tempered by painful memories. All the dreams of our early days came up before us—all the dear sports of our youth. We called up every scene in the past; and tracing out the long progress of our mutual affection through the gone years, now that we knew and understood our feelings, we wondered that we had not known them before. Living almost entirely alone, and seeing very little female society, Emily had retained all the beautiful delicacy of a woman's feelings, unmingled with any of the artificial reserve which so often mixes with, or perhaps I might say, supplies its place. Her affection was acknowledged; and she felt no fear in letting me know the extent of that affection. She sat beside me, and aided me to recall a thousand bright moments of happiness that we had spent together; and on the pictures of the past thus brought before our eyes, the sunshine of love poured full and strong, and lighted every object with a splendour not its own.

Thus time flew; and almost before we knew it, the mouth of the river Rance opened before us, with the beautiful bay into which it expands, and the multitude of rocky islands starting out of the pure waves, and glistening in the lustrous atmosphere of noon; while high upon our left rose the stern fortifications of St. Malo, and the isthmus of sand which connects—and hardly connects it, with the main land. The moment the ship dropped her anchor, the ramparts above were crowded with people; and when we had landed, a

thousand busy tongues about us almost deafened us with questions. Poor Emily was quite bewildered and confused; but, after a few formalities on entering the town, which were at that time greatly abridged in favour of English refugees, we were permitted to seek a dwelling; and soon, in the quiet of our own apartment, had leisure to congratulate each other on our security.

It was a strange and almost awful feeling, I confess, to find myself in the midst of a people with whom I had no feelings in common; who wished not with my wishes, and whose sympathies were none of mine:—to be in a strange land, without acquaintance, without resources, and to feel that the ports of my native country were closed by a thousand dangers against my footsteps. I should have experienced that feeling of solitude still more, but as I gazed on Emily, I felt that all I loved was with me; that my friends, my acquaintance, my country, my world was in her bosom; and that, with her by my side, the desert itself would seem scarce a wilderness in my eyes.

Little Ball-o'-fire had been the first on shore; and *Monsieur le Page*, with his gay dress, and flashing black eyes, seemed to captivate at once all the women of the place, who had gathered round to see us land. The boy, however, could not speak a word of French, and thus lost much of his advantage; but, nevertheless, he was calculated to make his way very well without a tongue; and within ten minutes after our arrival at the inn, he was in the street, and surrounded by half a dozen *Maloins*, asking him a thousand questions in a breath, none of which he understood, or would have answered if he had.

Though it had been already determined that we were not to proceed to Paris till my return from London, yet we soon resolved to quit the town of St. Malo, whose high walls and low streets gave us more the sensation of imprisonment than security. It mattered little, indeed, which way we turned our steps; and the facility of procuring boats to ascend the river Rance was our sole motive, I believe, for choosing the town of Dinan for our next resting-place. The sail up that river, the

Rance, is perhaps as beautiful as any thing that the varied earth can produce; and the morning of our departure was happily in accordance with the scene. Large masses of autumnal clouds floated heavily over the sky, but still the sunshine was predominant; and the shadows cast upon different parts of the scene but served to give the bright light of the rest a greater degree of brilliancy. On glided our boat; and, as the stream wound in and out among its high banks, we soon lost sight of St. Malo. Now darting through a narrow pass between immense cold rocks, which seemed scarcely to leave space for the passage of the boat, we could almost have touched the stony cliffs on either side; and now floating over the bosom of what seemed a wide, calm lake, we could perceive no outlet till we nearly reached the opposite shores. Thus alternately confined between tall crags, and pouring out into wide basins, the beautiful river flowed on; and, breasting its stream, we passed on in sunshine and shade, till, at last, rushing out from one of the deep gorges through which it poured, we beheld an immense extent of undulating country, covered here and there with wood, and broken in various spots with crags, while, brightly relieved by the deep shadow of a cloud which covered all the fore-ground, the town of Dinan appeared on its high hill behind, with its old battlements catching the full light of the day, as they hung over the bold masses of rock on which the town is perched.

It is wonderful how the feelings of all our hearts were soothed and softened by the beautiful scenery through which we passed. There is something, I know not what, in the aspect of nature in her loveliness, that has a strange gift of happiness; and could I choose, when any of life's great misfortunes fall upon me, I should desire to be carried to some new and magnificent scenes, certain that I should thence derive greater consolation than the tongue of eloquence ever yet poured forth. Is it, that in the presence of the great and lovely works of God, the petty cares of humanity are reprov'd?—or is it that their beauty and their harmony convince the soul of his goodness and his love,

while their majesty brings to our small senses a tangible image of his great power, and the whole shows that his will is right?

I do not know—but whereas at St. Malo some sad memories and painful anticipations had begun to crowd upon our minds, before we got to Dinan a softening shadow had fallen over the past, while hope lighted up the future anew. In pursuance of our plan, as soon as we reached the town we made inquiries, as if casually, in regard to the various convents in the neighbourhood; and having found one which promised in every respect to afford a comfortable abode to Emily and Lady Margaret during my absence, I proceeded to ascertain whether the superior were inclined to receive two English ladies as boarders. She was a venerable old lady, not unlike Lady Margaret herself in appearance; and, after conversing with her for some time in the parlour, I found that the only objection would be the fact of the ladies being Protestants.

“If they had no scruple, however,” the abbess said, “to attend the service of the chapel, she would willingly receive them;” and it was finally arranged, that for the small sum of thirty crowns per month, they were to have the best accommodation which the convent could afford. The next morning I conducted Lady Margaret and Emily to their abode; and leaving in the hands of the elder lady all the money which would not be wanted for my journey, I took leave of them with as cheerful an aspect as I could assume; but with many a bitter pang and painful apprehension in my heart.

I now returned immediately to the inn, and hearing that in the higher part of the town a large horse-market was actually going on, I climbed the steep street called the *Jerseval*, and easily procured two of a fine and hardy race of Brittany horses, to carry myself and little *Ball-o'-fire* back upon our way to England. Their services were immediately wanted; and while they were eating some corn, to enable them to proceed with vigour, I took care that they should be fitted with such saddles and equipments as the place could afford.

My departure, however, was delayed for half an hour, by my poor dog Rupert running up to me in the inn-yard, having made his escape from the convent, where I had left him with Emily and Lady Margaret. Not choosing to trust his safe return to the *garçon d'écurie*, and unwilling either to agitate Emily or to distress myself by going again to the convent, I sent the page to carry back poor Rupert; and during his absence, I encountered a person whose acquaintance, however undesired at first, has followed me to the present day.

I was standing beside one of the horses I had bought, ready to put my foot in the stirrup; the little valise containing all the clothes I thought necessary to take with me, was on the other beast, which was held ready for the page, and some degree of haste and impatience perhaps was in my countenance, when a large chestnut charger, which from its managed paces I concluded must have belonged to a troop of mountebanks, and grown gray in their service, was led out of one of the stables, followed by a person whose appearance was somewhat singular.

He was a tall meager man, of about fifty-five years of age, with grizzled mustachoes and hair, and a forehead high, but somewhat narrow; while his head rose up in an immense pile towards the apex, which had grown rather bald. His hat was in hand, and even as he came forth from the stable, when the only thing he could have been contemplating was his horse's tail, there was a simpering smile of blessed contentment upon his countenance, that spoke him at once the happiest man on earth in his opinion of himself.

His dress was somewhat fantastical also. The tops of his large riding-boots were crammed with frills of lace. His vest was green, the baldric of his sword pink, as were his stockings, while the garters, which were very full, were green, and his cloak dark blue. His hat offered a medium between the Spanish slouched hat and the steeple-crowned beaver of that day, which—with a gold band, and a feather stuck in at the side and leaning languishingly back over his left shoulder—completed his dress.

The moment he saw me he left his horse ; and composing his countenance into an expression of the most conceited modesty imaginable, he advanced towards me, made a bow, took another step, and made a second bow, and then begged the honour of saluting me. I was in no frame of mind to be either desirous of forming a fresh acquaintance, or even to be amused with the singularities of my new companion, and consequently I returned his civility but coldly.

"Monsieur was an Englishman?" the stranger asked; but before I could answer, he declared he saw it at once, by a certain *aimable froideur* of manner, which was peculiarly English. He then went on to feel sure that this was the first time I had been in France.

"Sir," continued he, "you are a happy man; I have often wished that for two or three days I could be a foreigner, just to enjoy to the full the exquisite delight of seeing France for the first time. We, sir—we who are accustomed to the beauty of our country, the grace of our countrymen, the loveliness of our women, and in fact, all the fascinations of France, we become dull, heavy, apathetic, to things that must ravish your senses, who behold them for the first time, and which must almost put you beside yourselves with enjoyment and admiration. Sir, I envy you the privilege of seeing France for the first time."

I could not but smile at this address, although my thoughts were any thing but turned towards amusement; and I replied that I hoped to find that delight in his country which he imagined would fall to my share, for that the circumstances which drove Englishmen from their native land in the present times rendered some compensation desirable. I was sorry after this reply had passed my lips; for it might naturally have led to some inquiries concerning the political state of England, to which I should not have felt disposed to reply; but my companion's mind was wholly occupied with one subject.

"Doubt it not, sir! doubt it not!" he replied. "What under heaven is there that man may not find in France? But, sir, you are going to ride. This probably is your

page who is now coming in. Let me hope that our way may lie together, in order that as we go I may have the pleasure of explaining to you some things that may be advantageous for you to hear."

"I am afraid," I replied, "that the direction I shall follow is not by any means certain; and also as it is my intention to travel as quickly as possible, the pace at which I go might not be agreeable to any one less pressed for time than I happen to be at this moment."

"Sir," said my new companion, "the way is perfectly as indifferent to me as it can be to you. I am travelling solely to enjoy the beauties and pleasures of a country unrivalled in ancient or modern Europe; and for the delight it will give me to accompany you on the road, I will slacken my horse's pace to a walk. As it is, I am accustomed to ride very fast. Allow me at the same time to point out to you that there is no country in the world where a stranger meets with so much attention, where he is welcomed with such kindness, entertained with such hospitality, protected with such magnanimity, defended with such generosity, or served with such liberality, as in France."

I wanted no society, and at first felt inclined to reject the stranger's proffered company with some rudeness; but difficulties and dangers of great magnitude teach us no better lesson than to bear trifling ills without wincing. He can do me no harm, I thought, after a short pause; and it is not worth while even to give his innocent vanity a moment's pain, far less quarrel with him outright, to rid myself of an hour or two's babble, which may perhaps serve to divert my thoughts from things that are painful, if not dangerous to rest upon. I bowed my head, therefore, in token of assent to his proposal; and as little Ball-o'-fire had now returned, I mounted my horse and walked him forward towards the archway that led into the street. My companion at the same time laid his hand upon his horse's shoulder; and though apparently neither very young nor very pliant of muscle, he sprang into the saddle without putting foot in stirrup, raised himself bolt upright on his seat, with a look of ineffable self-satisfaction, and

riding up to my side, proceeded with his panegyric on his native country.

"As I was saying, sir, when your page arrived," he continued, "what is there under heaven that man may not find in France?—either given to her naturally by her climate, or brought by the extent of her commerce and the attractive glory of her name. Situated at a just distance both from the equator and the pole, France comprises within itself the most temperate portion of the earth, and excels all the countries of Europe in three particulars,—*primo*, in being the best situated; *secundo*, in being the most magnanimous and warlike; and *tertio*, in being the most learned and most witty."

I was now beginning to be in some degree entertained with my new companion, from the very excess of absurdity to which he carried the madness of national vanity; and, willing to hear more as I was destined to hear at all, I resolved to offer a sufficient degree of opposition to call forth the peculiarities of his character. I am afraid, however, there was a touch of Frank's inclination to sneer mingled with my reply, as I said,

"In regard to learning, wit, and situation, doubtless France is superior to any other country on the face of the earth; but as to being more warlike, I am afraid that cannot well be proved at the present moment, when England is nothing but one scene of strife from one end to the other."

"Your pardon! your pardon, my dear sir," replied the Frenchman; "rebellion cannot justly be called war; and the bloody struggles which are taking place at this moment in England, cannot be held honourable to any party. At the same time, were such civil dissensions any proof of a warlike character, the same are now actually occurring in France, only with this difference, that the French, with the magnanimous loyalty which distinguishes them above any other people, only make war against the minister, not against the king."

I had no idea, from the specimen of his intellect afforded by his national vanity, that my companion was capable of such subtle distinctions; but I had

afterward many occasions to discover that his patriotic prejudices, if they may so be called, formed the very weakness of a mind, which, on other points, was naturally shrewd; and that even on those subjects, he could bring many a specious argument to bear with great seeming force. In short, he was the very Don Quixote of nationality; and his powers of lauding his beloved country seemed perfectly inexhaustible.

“Do not suppose, my dear sir,” he proceeded, “that my eyes are blinded by partiality for my native country. On my honour, I feel myself as free from national prejudice as it is possible to be. I see all the excellence of other nations; and admire the peculiar virtues of the Englishman, the German, the Swiss, the Italian, the Spaniard. Nevertheless, I cannot help giving to France the palm, especially in all warlike matters. It is, sir, the theatre of honour and the temple of glory. I am well aware that all other nations upon the earth would attempt, though in vain, to contest this pre-eminence; because the desire which each person naturally feels to form part of a race more powerful and more illustrious than their neighbours teaches them to believe that the truth is as they wish; without considering that, as there is but one sun in the sky, there is but one France in the universe, which excels every other country, as much as the sun does every star.”

I did not at all feel sure that my companion was not mad; and to ascertain the fact, I turned the conversation, as we passed along, to various other subjects, on all of which he spoke sensibly and shrewdly, as long as he did speak upon them; but by a thousand most ingenious devices, he managed to turn gently back to France, however dissimilar the topic which we had begun with. To pass the time, I persisted in endeavouring to force him from his favourite matter; and for more than an hour strove in vain to pursue any other subject of conversation. At length, as from the high grounds near Dol we caught a view of the Mont St. Mitchell, I said I wondered that on so favourable a spot for astronomical purposes an observatory had not been erected.

“It is very extraordinary indeed!” replied he; “but doubtless there is some good reason for it with which we are not acquainted. At a casual glance we often think that things are both necessary to be done and easy of execution: ay, sir, and even when we have given the matter some consideration, hold the same opinion; when, in fact, if we were to examine deeply, we should find that what we conceived easy was impossible; what we judged necessary was useless. Now, my young friend, the best advice which I could give a stranger would be, to think,—whatever seemed to him strange, or imperfect, or wrong, while travelling in France—that there is some excellent cause for its being as he sees. Now in regard to astronomical science, a person who did not appreciate fully the excellence of France might draw from such observations as you have just made that those branches of science did not flourish among us. The exact reverse, however, is known to be the case; and in astronomy, geometry, natural philosophy, it is acknowledged by all that we excel every thing that ancient or modern times have produced. Even while I speak, is not Descartes astonishing the world with some new discovery, and proving the superiority of his own country in all arts and all sciences? Is not Paris the general place of assembly for the learned and the scientific? Do not they flock to France from every quarter of the habitable globe?”

I now found that to attempt any change of subject was quite in vain, and therefore suffered my companion to pursue his happy reveries on the blessed excellence of his native country uninterrupted, as we journeyed forward from Dol to Pontorson. These reveries, indeed, when once suffered to proceed, seemed to absorb all his senses. He thought of nothing, he saw nothing else but France; and wanted even that prying curiosity into the affairs of others which I have met with in many of his countrymen. He asked me no questions, either concerning myself or my country; and, perfectly happy in being listened to so long on the subject nearest

his heart, he pointed me out to the landlord of our auberge at Pontorson, in an under voice, as a *garçon du plus grand mérite*; adding something, however, to express what a pity it was that I was not a Frenchman.

CHAPTER VI.

THE landlord at Pontorson served us with great respect, and seemed to know my companion well, calling him Monsieur de Vitray. I consequently took an opportunity of inquiring who and what he was of the worthy aubergiste, whose house and appearance spoke respectability on his own part. The picture drawn of Monsieur de Vitray was very flattering. He had a large estate about seven leagues off, the innkeeper said, but as he was *vieux garçon*, he seldom lived at his chateau, but spent a part of his time in Paris, and the rest in travelling alone over the country. He was very charitable and liberal, he said further, accomplished and learned, according to an aubergiste's capabilities of judging. "But," added the landlord, with a roguish twinkle of the eye, "he loves his own country as well as any man I ever saw; and perhaps he has already told Monsieur how very fine a place it is."

This account satisfied me; for, with true English suspicion, I was beginning to fancy, as the stranger was very different from any specimen of human nature which I had hitherto seen, that he must be something different from what he seemed to be; and I had expected more than once that he would either ask me to play, or attempt some other of the many ways with which French sharpers relieve gulls of their superfluous money.

Monsieur le Marquis de Vitray adhered to his invariable subject, however, during the whole evening; and as I did contrive to glean from the vast stubble field of his conversation some occasional heads of real information concerning France and its present state, I was

not absolutely annoyed on finding that the journey which he had laid out for himself, before he met with me, led him towards Calais, and that consequently we should most likely travel all the way together.

I did calculate indeed—though falsely—on his exhausting the subject of France; and I thought I perceived, from occasional glimpses of keen good sense, that I might derive both pleasure and advantage from his knowledge and acquirements, if I could but get him to quit the theme of his insanity, for his partiality towards his native country was nothing better. I therefore not unwillingly arranged to rise early the following morning, and pursue my journey in his company; and, telling me he was delighted to have a further opportunity of pointing out to me the beauties and excellences of the splendid country we should have to pass through, he left me soon, and retired to bed.

Our onward journey offered little of any interest, but I found that the subject of France was not to be exhausted; and as my only resource, I led my companion to speak of the various parts of the country he had visited, which drew from him many curious details and descriptions, mingled still with immense and extravagant praises of each and every part of the beloved realm which was the god of his idolatry.

In return for my attention, I found that I had myself excited as much interest in the bosom of Monsieur de Vitray as any thing on earth not French could do; and towards the end of our sixth or seventh day's journey, he did pause to ask me several leading questions about myself and country. In regard to England, its productions, the manners of its inhabitants, and every other circumstance, except the political divisions of the times, he was totally and potently ignorant; and even of our civil wars he knew very little, except that they had driven many Englishmen into exile; and he mentioned one or two instances of the misery to which some of my noblest countrymen had been reduced by the total failure of all their resources.

My spirits were already sufficiently depressed, and his news did not tend to raise them; when to my sur-

prise, my companion followed up his tidings by an offer of pecuniary assistance, in case my circumstances required it. I thanked him for his generosity; but told him that for the time I was in no need of such aid; I added, however, as I found that at heart he was really a liberal and noble-minded man, that in case at any future time I might need protection, countenance, or any of those services which the native of a country can show a foreigner, I would call upon him to remember his journey from Dinan to Calais.

"Do so! do so!" he said, "and I shall only think myself acting with that propriety and justness of sentiment which distinguishes the French above every other nation on the earth, when I do my best endeavours to serve you. But in France, sir, you are sure to find friends. It is the peculiar privilege of her polite and happy people"—and he dashed once more into the old strain.

Our journey was somewhat longer than I had calculated upon, for as we got into the Comté d'Eu, we were obliged to make several considerable circuits to avoid spots which it seemed were notoriously infested by robbers. I was at first inclined to treat the reports we heard at the inns as the common exaggeration of that most marvellous race of men called innkeepers; but when I found even Monsieur de Vitray acknowledge that various parts of the country called Ponthieu were so famous for their free foresters that no one could pass without risking his purse, his life, or a detention of several days in order to extort some ransom, I was obliged to believe a tale so disadvantageous to his native country. It was true, he said, that the principal part of these brigands were foreigners, and happy might the traveller think himself when he fell into the hands of a Frenchman, who was sure at least to show him courtesy even while he cut his purse. We passed all these dangers, however, in safety; and, the day of our arrival at Calais, another suspension of my companion's praises of France took place, as it seemed to strike him for the first time that I was returning to England. On his asking if such were the case, I in-

formed him that it was, and told him so far, that my object was to procure the liberation of a brother, who was kept there in prison.

He entered with more warmth into the matter than I imagined he could have done; and, on inquiring into my means and hopes of success, he shook his head on hearing that I had neither any letter to the persons in power, who might protect me, nor any apparent business which might serve as a pretext to my stay in London.

"It will never do! it will never do!" he said. "Unless the English are very stupid indeed, they will find you out in a day. But stay, I know a worthy and respectable avoué in Calais, who has transacted some business for me; and who manufactures, I am told, false papers for smugglers and contraband traders of all kinds; doubtless he can help us, and after supper we will go and consult him."

Supper—and an excellent supper it was—was put upon the table; but its discussion promised to be much longer than I could either have expected or desired; for Monsieur de Vitray took advantage of the excellence of some pigeons *en compote* to lecture the garçon upon the superiority of France.

"Good God!" he cried, "what country is equal to France? Tell me, mon cher, are these exquisite pigeons the production of Calais; and were they really stewed in this house?"

The waiter assured him they were so, and he proceeded with increasing zeal. "It is an extraordinary thing—really it is an extraordinary thing, how much France excels all the countries of the earth in small things as well as great! Here, the hearing and the sight, and the smell and the taste, all receive their most perfect satisfaction. As to taste, who could doubt it with such pigeons before them? But were it necessary to go into proof, it might easily be shown that both by natural productions and by the art of dressing them France is incomparably the land of good living. Are not our rivers larded with eels and lampreys, paved with tench and carp, filled with salmon and pike, thick

with trout and perch? Does not the air flutter with pheasants, partridges, ortolans, pigeons, plovers, wild duck, widgeons, teal? Are not the fields living with hares and rabbits? Are not our forests thronged with boars and deer, the stag, the roebuck, and the fallow deer? Look at our other productions also! Sip the wines of, Burgundy, Champagne, and Medoc! Taste the cheeses of Roquefort and Neufchatel, and Cental; the butter of the valley de Campan, the Pres vallée, and the Mont-d'or! Eat the fruits of Touraine and Languedoc! Season with the oil of Provence. Feed on the capons of Gascony and Maine! Play with the chickens of Caen, the frogs of Paris, and the snails of Epernay! Go to Rome and Constantinople! traverse Germany and the United Provinces! pause in England! walk through Switzerland! rush across Spain! where—where—where will you meet a country like France? Nowhere! nowhere on the face of the habitable globe."

Gradually as he spoke, turning all the time to the unhappy garçon, he had become more and more animated in his discourse; his supper had ceased, his hand, armed with the knife he had been using, was extended in the energy of declamation, while his eyes flashed, and his speech became loud and overpowering. The garçon drew a step back; and little Ball-o'-fire, who sat beside me without understanding a word that was passing, took the furious gestures he beheld as signals of approaching strife, and laid his hand upon his dagger.

I stopped it, however, before it sprang from its sheath; and the consternation which his vehemence had caused at length brought our good companion to his senses; when, suddenly resuming his calmness and his supper, he proceeded to the conclusion of his pigeon without a word more.

When supper was over, we turned our steps, according to his first proposal, towards the attorney's house. Having wound through several dark streets, we at length reached the dwelling of the manufacturer of false papers, to which we were admitted by a dirty woman.

servant, who lighted us up a long and narrow stair, to the chamber where the attorney was busy in his calling. He was a little, sharp, dingy man, with eyes like black currants, and a beard like a bottle-brush.

It was not till Monsieur de Vitray told him who he was, however, that he remembered my conductor.

"Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!" reiterated he, as soon as it was explained. "I remember very well; yes, yes! We got the poor devil out of that scrape! Yes, yes, yes! Always very happy to do a kindness to a fellow-creature! I live by assisting folks in distress. Yes, yes, yes! oh yes! remember very well. Pray be seated!"

Monsieur de Vitray now informed him that it was my intention to go privately to England, where, as it might be dangerous to appear in my own character, I had come to him for assistance on the occasion.

"Oh yes, yes! certainly! yes, yes, yes! nothing so easy," said the attorney. "You shall be come from Messieurs Verité and Francommerce, at Nantes, bound for Hamburg; and consigned to Messieurs Chicane and Doubletouche. Yes, yes—yes, yes, yes! nothing so easy. When do you sail? What's the cargo?"

It was now to be explained that I was not in the precise situation that he supposed; and at length, having made him comprehend exactly what we desired, he laid his finger on the side of his nose, and exclaimed,

"Yes, yes, yes, yes! I see! I see! What you want is an ostensible object, which can be proved and substantiated to cover your purposes of a different nature. Good! very good! That can be managed too, I should suppose. Holla, Marguerite! Go and tell Monsieur Lalande that I want to speak with him as soon as possible. This Monsieur Lalande," he continued, while his dirty maid was gone upon the errand he had given her in charge—"this Monsieur Lalande is one of our best merchants here in Calais; and on account of *certain little pieces of information* which, from time to time, he has furnished to the English council of state, he is suffered to carry on *certain little*

branches of trade with London, which are forbidden to French merchants."

"But how shall I be sure," I demanded, "that one of these little pieces of information which he may think necessary to communicate to the government of the rebel parliament may not be that I am in London, if they choose to arrest me as a suspicious person?"

"No, no, no, no!" replied the man of laws; "he knows better than that. He shall give good security to your friend Monsieur de Vitray here, that you run no danger from either the affairs with which he may intrust you or from any information he may give."

"Such security I shall require to the amount of two thousand louis," rejoined Monsieur de Vitray, "guarantying my young friend's safety, as far as this Monsieur Lalande is concerned; for though there is not a nation upon the face of the earth that can produce such a multitude of honourable, high-spirited, and noble-minded men as the French people—though delicacy of sentiment, nicety of feeling, and inviolable adherence to their word, may be said to be the true character of Frenchmen; and though no Frenchman, whose blood is pure and unmixed, would, for any temptation—no, not for the empire of the Cesars—commit a base or dishonourable action, we cannot be always so clear of a man's true origin as to trust the safety of a friend in his hands, without some better assurance of his virtue than merely his *name* being French."

"It is as well," he added, in a whisper to me, "to take the security he offers; for though, Heaven knows, it would be very difficult to prove any thing against them if they were to betray us, yet I would certainly pursue the affair; and for the honour of Frenchmen, which, by-the-way, is a better security than all their bonds, they would not like to have any dirty business brought before their countrymen."

I felt not a little obliged by the ingenuity with which Monsieur de Vitray modified his prejudices, to agree with his anxiety for my welfare; and soon after he had done speaking, Monsieur Lalande himself was ushered in. His countenance was not peculiarly prepossess-

ing, but he readily undertook to do that which was required; and on the moderate consideration of ten louis-d'ors, he furnished me with a letter to his agent in London, ordering I do not know how many hundred pairs of silk stockings according to sample, and leaving me to discuss with him "*the affair of the aquavite,*" of which I knew not one word.

On begging to be enlightened on this subject, the worthy merchant replied, with a grin, that the words he had used would commit me to nothing but a glass of strong waters, which he had never yet known disagreeable to an Englishman. The term was evidently a conventional one between the merchant and his agent; and—satisfied with the bond he gave, neither directly nor indirectly to afford information of my going, to any other person whatsoever—I paid him his money. I then obtained from the attorney certain necessary passes and forms for quitting the French and entering the English ports, whether real or forged I know not; and having satisfied him also, and his portress, I took my leave with Monsieur de Vitray, and returned to the auberge *du cerf blanc*, where we had alighted.

The next morning, as early as possible, I procured for myself and my page two decent suits of black, which I had not before had time to buy. My horses and equipage of every kind that I could part with I sold, and did not lose much, considering the circumstances in which I was placed. I caused my long hair to be cut off, shaved away my mustachoes and beard, changed my hat for the most steeple-crowned beaver I could find; and having given little Ball-o'-fire many a lesson in regard to his demeanour, by which he profited far more than I expected, I prepared to seek a ship to convey me across that fortunate channel which separates England from the rest of Europe:

A fishing-boat was the only means that presented itself; but the sea was calm, and the weather promising; and having taken leave of the kind companion of my last journey, who assured me, as we parted, that I should never be happy till I returned to France, which, beyond all doubt, was the abode of happiness and the

garden of delight, I got down to the port, and having made my bargain with the fisherman, was soon bounding over the sunshiny waves towards my native land once more.

My name was now changed to Master Harvey. Little Ball-o'-fire, all enjoyment at the idea of cheating the Roundheads, was Dick, my boy; and never did I see a lad so rapidly take up the part he was to act, and go through every turn of it, without overcharging it in the least. Neither he nor I were very well fitted to act as Puritans; but there existed at that time a large class between them and the Cavaliers, consisting of staid, thoughtful, money-making people. One of this body I was calculated to represent with little difficulty. The events which had lately passed had left traces sufficiently deep behind them to take off any of the youthful swagger which might have stamped me as a Cavalier; and the penury of my finances imposed upon me the cautious economy which was a part of the character I proposed to assume. Thus the matter was rendered easy to me; and in regard to the boy, he seemed to conceive his part at once, and to feel a pleasure in performing it to the life. The natural brevity of speech which I have before remarked was no small advantage to him, as it was not likely to lead him into any unwary disclosures, and the early knowledge of the world's worst side, which he had acquired by the wandering and dangerous existence he had led, kept him always on his guard against the curiosity of others.

Thus prepared, after a long but easy sail we landed at Folkestone, intending to pursue our journey to London. The only difficulty that awaited us here was found in procuring horses. At length, however, two ugly monsters as ever were seen were produced, for which an enormous price was asked; but as it neither suited my finances, nor the character I wished to play, to disburse so much money on so bad a bargain, I agreed with a carrier, who was setting out the same day for Canterbury, to take my boy and myself on the front of his cart. As we drove slowly away, I heard

one of the inn-door loiterers ask the worthy hostler, who had recommended strongly the horses I had declined, "Know ye who they be, Bill?"

"Not I," answered the waterer of horses. "Some damned shabby London hosier, I suppose, and his shopboy. One of those that have neither spirit to cant like a Puritan, nor swear like a Cavalier."

This character, which on ordinary occasions would not have sounded very flattering in my ears, now gave me no displeasure. My only fear indeed was that it might call forth some sally from little Ball-o'-fire which would not be exactly in harmony with our appearance; but on looking down at his face, I saw that he was sitting with the most demure aspect in the world, while a slight twinkle in the corner of his eye betrayed to me, and me alone, that he had heard what passed, and amused himself with the hostler's compliment.

At Canterbury I found a better store of steeds, and suited myself well at half the price which had been demanded for the bony mountains we had refused at Folkestone. I here also laid in a number of samples of silks and dimities, as I calculated upon passing myself for a trader; and after spending an undisturbed night at the inn, I set out early the following day for London. A long and hard day's riding brought me to the great city, without any accident or occurrence worthy of notice; and under the direction of my little page, who seemed to know every street and alley that it contained, I made my way to a small, neat inn in the ward of Cheap, nearly opposite the spot where I found one of the old crosses formerly stood, which had been pulled down by the Puritans. The boy had chosen excellently well, and perfectly in harmony with my assumed character. The house was the resort of country manufacturers and traders, and combined with cleanness and quiet, comfort and frugality. As it was now approaching towards night, I was shown to a neat small chamber, with a truckle-bed for the boy, by the side of the larger one. The innholder himself, who had led me thither, then demanded and received my orders for refreshment, and left me to contemplate my

situation, as I now stood, for the first time in the capital of my native land, without one friend on earth to whom I could apply, and surrounded on every side by difficulties and dangers.

CHAPTER XX.

Of all kinds of solitude, there is none like the solitude of a great town—so utterly desert, as far as human sympathies go. A great town is like an immense Eastern bazaar, where men buy and sell, and are bought and sold; and without one has some merchantable quality or commodity, or some of the many kinds of coin with which the trade in human relationships is carried on, he is like a beggar in the market-place, and it must be all steril as the plains of Arabia Petræa.

I had nothing to sell; I could be of assistance to no one; I came not to barter my courage, or my talents, or my strength, or my labour, in raising any man to power, or wealth, or fame; and on the other hand—of influence, interest, or riches, I had but little or none to pay any human thing I might buy to serve me myself. I knew no one in all the vast mass of buildings that rose in awful murkiness around me; there was not one heart in the whole dark hive that beat in sympathy with mine; and as I gazed from the high window of my chamber out upon the sea of human dwellings that stretched on every side, I felt more lonely than ever I had done before in my existence.

The sun was setting rapidly in London, and pouring through the foul and smoky air a red and lurid glare: oh, how unlike the bright effulgence of his decline in the calm country! It was like the purest and the best gifts of heaven, that we so frequently see darkened and perverted by the passions and the vices of the earthly beings on which they are bestowed. High up as I was, I caught the sinking beams as they

streamed through the plague-loaded air; but down in the streets below, darkness had asserted her right of reign, and single lanterns began to creep along the street, lighting the careful burghers from the dens of their daily toil, either to their evening meal or to some dwelling detached from their shops. There was something both painful and degrading in the sight—I know not well what. Viewing them separately—distinct from the great fact of society, and all the sublime consequences that result from the mighty association of human [intellects; viewing them, too, with perhaps somewhat of a jaundiced eye, the race of beings that were there crawling about seemed so near related to the insect,—so wormlike in their habits and their state of existence, that I shrank from the idea of partaking the same nature, and, sick at heart, I turned away.

The worthy host was entering at that moment with the supper I had ordered, more indeed for the boy than myself; and he, seeing me look somewhat pale, pressed me to my meal in a friendly tone, that took off the first layer of misanthropy that was gathering round my heart. He lamented deeply, as he set upon the table some cold roast-beef, that I had not arrived in time to partake of it warm, when he had placed it on his guest-table that day—as fine a sirloin as ever was cut! However, it was well-nigh as good cold, he said; and as for the plum-porridge that accompanied it, it would do the heart of any man good, though he were as tired as if he had ridden to Coventry.

Little Ball-o'-fire found the viands very satisfactory; and, in truth, a flagon of excellent wine reconciled me greatly, in spite of myself, to being of the same race as the London burghers. As I wanted information also concerning my brother, I desired the host to sit down, and take his share of the tankard—an invitation host never yet refused; and drawing his chair near the fire, which had been kindled for the evening, he sat nearly opposite to me, and did justice to his own wine, seasoning it with several jests and several tales, which brought him occasionally near the subject on which I required

intelligence. He spoke cautiously, however, and seemed anxious to discover the political feelings of his guest, before he committed himself by any observations on the state of the country. I doubted not, nevertheless—from a certain laborious effort which he made to bring in a text from the Bible, or some scriptural expression sufficiently misapplied,—that the good innholder was not originally of the true-blue Presbyterian stuff which in general formed the materials of the inhabitants of the city. On this supposition I ventured, on one occasion, to call the parliamentary party, Roundheads, as if by accident, at which word mine host had nearly started from his seat; and laying his finger on his lips, looked timidly round, uttering a long “Whew!”

I affected to be surprised at his emotion, and apologized for using a wrong word, saying that I had been so long abroad occupied in my trade, that I did not rightly know the names by which the parties were designated in England.

“Then I’ll tell you what, young gentleman,” replied the host: “take an old fox’s advice, and while you are in London never mention the word roundhead, or prick-ear, or rebel, any more than you would talk of a rope in the house of a man who has been hanged. But sigh if you can, and look solemn; and speak of the blessed league and covenant, and say a few words about God-fearing folk; and if you have any Scripture phrases, in Heaven’s name make use of them right or wrong. So shall you pass through this city with good report, and maybe escape the pillory.”

“Why my good friend,” I replied, “I do not intend to do any thing to deserve the pillory, and therefore trust to escape it; but as I may fall into other sins, through ignorance, I prithee tell me what has been passing here during the last day or two, that I may know who are good men and who are not. Lords Goring and Capel—how are they held now?”

“Hush, hush!” cried the host; “mention not the names of such black malignants; the name of Satan himself would be more savoury to the nostrils of the

saints. They are both of them, thank God, safely housed at Windsor, there to await judgment."

It was evident enough that the good landlord seasoned his mention of the Cavaliers with epithets very different from those which he would have bestowed had his heart been free; and I proceeded to ask him what had become of Lord Goring's Kentish companions.

"Some in prison—some in prison, alack!" replied the host; "and some wandering about the country. But I must be bustling, I must be bustling," he continued, evidently alarmed at the turn which the conversation had taken. "Here, Jack, Will, carry away Master—"

"Harvey," I said, as he paused for the name.

"Ay, ay, true. Master Harvey's supper. Will, you dog! make haste;" and so saying, the worthy innkeeper took his leave, and left me to seek repose.

I was too much fatigued, and too anxious, to be able to sleep soundly; and after a night of restless and troublous dreams, I rose to consider what course I ought to pursue, to gain tidings of my brother. Up to that moment I had formed no plan for my further conduct. To reach London and seek for Frank, as best I might, had been my determination, thinking that some means of prosecuting that search would naturally occur to me; but now, the question of how to carry it on, where to begin, or in what manner to proceed, puzzled me completely; and for near half an hour I continued walking up and down my little chamber, without coming to any conclusion. At length, with little Ball-o'-fire for my guide, I issued forth into the street, in order to proceed to the agent of Monsieur Lalande, one Hezekiah Manuel, in Bucklersbury.

Every thing was already in activity and confusion; and my eyes were dazzled, and my ears deafened, with the various sights, sounds, and cries of the streets. There was business and importance too in the air of every one; and though, God knows, I had anxieties enough at heart—among the number of grave and thoughtful faces that I encountered, some with eyes fixed upon the stones, some with lips speaking to

themselves, some looking straight-forward, yet seeing nothing but the object of their own thoughts, and running over every thing in their way—I felt as if I was the only really idle person there.

After walking along the great thoroughfare for some way, we turned through one or two narrower streets; and on inquiring for Hezekiah Manuel, were directed to a tall gloomy house, with no signs whatever of activity or business in its aspect. As we approached, a single individual came forth, leaving a door, which swung with a weight and pulley, to close itself behind him. In this operation, however, we interrupted it; and going in, found ourselves in the entry of a long warehouse, up the dim extent of which we could see several figures of porters and warehousemen moving about in silence and semi-obscurity.

On our right-hand a considerable space had been taken off the warehouse for what were apparently counting-houses. These were separated from the rest of the building by thick partitions of wood, with here and there a high window, looking up the long perspective of the ware-rooms. A door also, with some effaced inscription, probably purporting that there stood the office, appeared in the wood-work; and thither we directed our steps, knocking first, to obtain permission to enter. A voice shouted to us to come in; and a moment afterward, we stood in a dull small room, in which were two individuals, one of whom I concluded to be the person I wanted.

There was no great difficulty in distinguishing the trader. His whole appearance at once proclaimed him; but the other individual was not so easily recognised. He was at the time I entered leaning with his right arm upon a high desk, and holding his sheathed sword in his left hand, with an air of easy freedom. His figure was fine and manly, and his countenance noble, but stern and dark. His dress was that of an officer of high rank; and yet there was a scrupulous simplicity about it, which went beyond that of the most puritanic of his party. The eyes of both the trader and his companion were fixed upon the door, with

something of expectation in them; and as I entered, the exclamation of "It is not he yet," broke from both the strangers at once.

It was not at all my desire to come in collision with any part of the parliamentary army; and therefore advancing at once to the merchant, I presented him the letter from his correspondent at Calais, telling him at the same time, that as I saw he was busy I would come back again the following day. He twisted open the letter, however, without answering me, and read the contents.

"Oh, very well! very well! young man," he said, when he saw what it contained. "To-morrow will do. Come about noon. A youth from France," he continued, turning to his companion. "From Lalande, you know, Master Henry, who gives us such good intelligence. But there seems nothing at present."

By the time he had finished his sentence I was out of the room; and closing the door behind me, was issuing forth into the street, when I was suddenly called back. "Young man! Master what's-your-name!" shouted the merchant. "A word with you! a word with you, if you please."

"I turned accordingly, not particularly pleased with the recall; and he led the way back to the inner room, where I found his companion seated at a table, and apparently waiting my return. He had Lalande's letter in his hand; and as I entered, politely pointed to a seat. "Sit down, Master Harvey!" he said, in a fine deep voice, running his eye over the letter, for my name. "Sit down and answer me a few questions, which I wish resolved concerning the state of France. You are an Englishman, I presume, by your name?" I bowed. "Probably one of the Harveys of Sandwich!" he continued.

"We are from the same origin," I replied; "but I was born in Devonshire."

"Have you been long in France?" he proceeded, rather in a tone of magisterial examination, which did not particularly put me at my ease.

"Some time," I answered, restricting my rejoinders to as few words as possible.

"When did you arrive, and where did you land?" he next demanded.

"I came to England the day before yesterday," I replied, "and landed at Folkestone; from thence proceeded to Canterbury with a carrier, and thence rode to London."

"Good!" said the examiner; "good; and what may be your business or employment?"

"I am at present a traveller," I replied, with rather a double meaning to my words, "and am glad to carry commissions for any good house."

"When go you back to France?" demanded the officer thoughtfully.

"As soon," I replied, "as I can finish my business here."

"Well then," said the other, "I will trust you perchance with a commission, when you go thither, which if you execute faithfully and well, you shall have cause to be satisfied. But hark," he added, as the swinging of the outer door made itself heard. "Get you into that inner chamber—I will speak with you more in a few minutes. Close the door!"

As he spoke I arose, and turned towards the inner door to which he pointed; and as I did so, some one dressed also as a parliamentary officer entered by the opposite one. I passed out so rapidly, however, that I could neither myself see who it was that entered, nor could be seen by him with any distinctness. Little Ball-o'-fire, who was behind me, had a better glance; and we had scarcely entered the room, when he whispered in my ear that the new comer was the very man who had commanded the soldiers at Masterton House. The first words that were uttered in the other chamber immediately confirmed this piece of news; and I found that I might congratulate myself on having escaped the friendly glance of my old acquaintance, Master Walter Dixon, by a single moment. I proceeded as far as I could from the door, which little Ball-o'-fire had certainly pushed to, but had not completely closed, instigated

by a curiosity, I believe, of which he had his full share. From the distance at which I sat only a small part of what was said reached my ears; but the boy, notwithstanding several signs I made him to desist, continued to listen, and afterward repeated to me nearly all that passed.

"Give you good morrow, Master Ireton," said the well-known tones of Walter Dixon. "Give you good morrow, Master Manuel; but methinks it would be better for you to avoid the room, while I speak with General Ireton."

"Not in the least," replied the person who had just been speaking to me, and whom I now found to be the well-known and since more famous Ireton. "Not in the least! stay, Master Manuel. I shall entreat you, Master Dixon, to keep to general terms, for reasons best known to myself. All that may pass between you and me can be talked of in such a manner as to commit no one."

"With all my heart!" rejoined Walter Dixon. "But it is to be remembered, too, that my business is to be spoken of, as well as yours. However, I care not; great things are seldom arranged by private conversations; and little can be made of any thing I can say."

"Well, sir," rejoined Ireton, "the only question between us, and for which I have waited you here near an hour, is whether you will or will not undertake to do what was proposed to you by the council of agitators."

"Major-general Ireton," answered Walter Dixon, "you speak as if I were to be at your beck at the slightest word; and that when you write to me from Essex, saying meet me at such an hour and such a place, I were to leave all other necessary business to do your bidding. Such, however, cannot be the case; I have come out of good-will to meet you, as soon as I could conveniently; and I have to reply, that if you will ensure me the possession of the estates so often held out to me as the rewards for my good services, and so often refused when the services were performed—if you will ensure them to me, I will undertake what you propose; but if not, you must seek some other man."

"Sir, how can I ensure them to you," demanded Ireton, "when I have but one voice out of many?"

"This is all very specious, Master Ireton," rejoined the other; "but I have it from the best authority, that you were chiefly the person to oppose their grant to me, notwithstanding the good service I had rendered in staying Masterton's regiment from joining Goring till Fairfax beat him."

"We had no excuse, sir, for sequestrating the estates," replied Ireton, "and therefore I opposed their being granted to any one but the lady who possessed them."

"No excuse, sir!" echoed Walter Dixon, in an angry tone. "What, when she received and maintained at her house one of the bitterest malignants of the time; and kept his whole regiment quartered down in the village for five days!"

"How could she help it?" demanded Ireton. "What power had she to resist his stay? where was her force to expel the Cavaliers he brought?"

"Pshaw! pshaw! Master Ireton," answered the other. "The fair dame of Penford-bourne would have lost her lands long ago, had she been less fair. But now, man—now that she is gone, no one knows whither; now that her malignancy is as clear and evident as daylight, or your own republicanism, what reason, in justice or in policy, can be given for not granting me the estates? Am I not her cousin, her next of kin?"

"Ay, but her husband!" said Ireton; "you forget her husband, sir. The estates are his in reversion, and not yours. I know what you would say—that he is a malignant, and a worshipper of the beast, and so forth—this Sir Andrew Fleming. But between you and me such language must not be talked. Let him worship what beast he will, it matters little to the state. Against the state he has never drawn his sword; and more, he is protected by Mazarin, with whom there is good hope of a treaty, which will take the sting out of the young serpent that is now riding the seas."

"So! so! that chimes well with what I heard be-

fore," replied the other; "and so, while Ireton, and Cromwell, and Harrison are raising up their heads from nothing, and riding in their coaches, I, as good a man as any of them, am to be denied the first and only thing I ask, because a foul, papistical malignant is protected by one of the scarlet brotherhood of Rome! Fy, Master Ireton—fy, this is not as it should be; and it must be mended too. It would seem as if that man's life were destined to be my plague. Why! how did he escape the fever of which his hypocritical friend Du Tillet died, in the spring tide? But this must be amended! Major-general Ireton, I will be a whistle for no man's mouth, to call his dogs when he wants them. I will not undertake what your agitators require; I will not go to the fool parliament, and—"

"Hush! hush! hush!" cried the others, and then followed a conversation in a lower key, which was nearly lost, except an occasional phrase spoken louder for the sake of emphasis. Thus I heard the words—

"A thousand pounds paid you down now by Manuel here."—"Tis a temptation," answered the other, "but it will not do—I am for France." Then followed something more, to which Dixon replied, "No, no, no! Why waste your money on me?—Pride will do it for pure zeal. No, no, I will have all or nothing. The day may come when you will have no excuse to refuse me; and then if you do refuse me—why, so be it! Now farewell. But whisper a word of the business in good Colonel Pride's ear, and he will do all you can desire. Farewell! Manuel, do not forget to see me to-night."

"Whither is he gone, now?" said the voice of the merchant. "I know not," answered Ireton, carelessly. "Perhaps to betray our secrets to the parliament: if he do that, he shall have short distance and a volley—Perhaps to murder this Sir Andrew Fleming: if he do that, pray God Mazarin hang him! He is no small villain that, I tell thee, Hezekiah Manuel; and I fear much we must give him the estates he covets, though they rightfully belong to a far better man than himself. 'Tis a great pity that in purifying the state, and lopping

sway all the monstrous anomalies with which the vices and follies of men have corrupted the only pure and simple form of government, we are obliged to work with such tools as that. Yet what can we do? our enemies use the like against us. If they be hypocrites, we must be hypocrites, and outdo them in hypocrisy. If they employ knaves, we must employ knaves, but make ours the more cunning knavery; and wo be to him alone whose object in doing so is bad! The end sanctifies the means; but if the end be bad, the means damn him who employs them. That man Dixon thinks I do not know him; but I do. He is what may be called a blunt hypocrite, and half his rudeness is affected to cover the cunning of his heart. You heard of that late business of his, and the escape of his prisoner. Oh, how he lamented the chance!—after he had been the denouncer of the malignant—the mover of his arrest—to lose him, when his condemnation and the sequestration of the estates was sure! Such was his talk; but if it was not all a cunning device, deeply connected with his longings for the other estates, I am deceived. I will tell you what must be done at present; and you, Manuel, must seek me out the man—”

“But you forget,” said the merchant, “the young man in the inner room; he must have heard all—”

“I did not forget him,” replied Ireton; “but the door is shut, and he could make nothing of what has passed, even if he did hear, especially if he be newly come to London. Call him forth, however, and we shall see.”

Little Ball-o'-fire had, as I have said, left a small clink of the door open when he followed me into the room; but as Ireton spoke the last words he pushed it to, almost imperceptibly, and then sprang to my side, where I sat at the farther end of the apartment, looking out of a narrow window into a small paved court, where two happy children were playing in the gutter, forming a strange contrast in their innocent gambols with the dark and knavish words that were continually poured into my ear from the other side.





